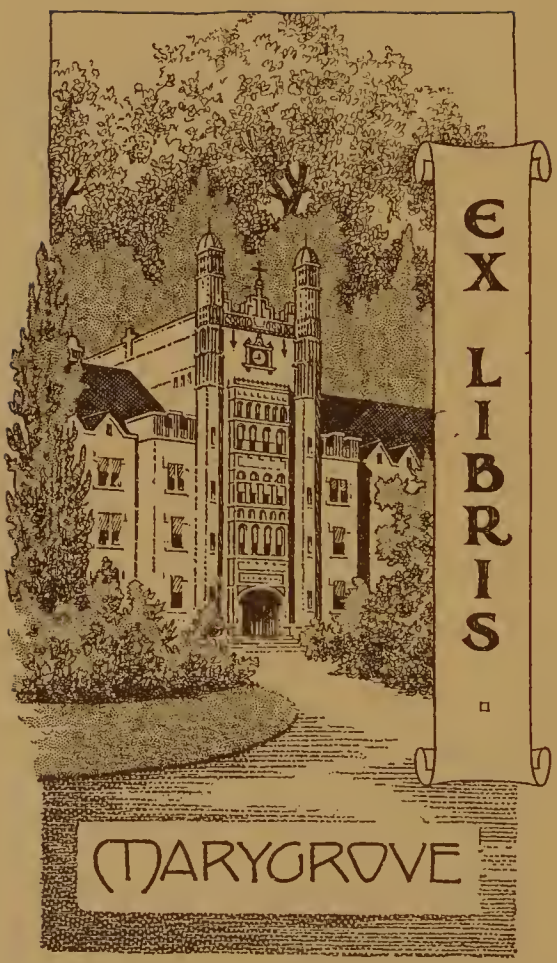
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TRANSCRIBED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION,
BY

G. C. HESELTINE

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INTRODUCTION

As our ignorance of the Middle Ages is very slowly dispelled by the rewriting of medieval history and the reading of medieval literature, we may find that what appeared to be medieval mediocrity was the result of our own myopia. As our sight improves, the veil may be lifted even from the Dark Ages, and the darkness discovered to be ours as much as theirs. Since the Reformation we have neglected the treasure-house of English religious literature and gone abroad for our spiritual reading. Many thousands who have read Thomas à Kempis, St Augustine and St Francis, and who are familiar with the lives of St Teresa of Jesus, St John of the Cross and St Catherine of Siena, have never heard of Richard Rolle, St Edmund Rich, Walter Hilton, Dame Julian of Norwich, to mention but a few who lived and wrote sublime spiritual English in abundance within a short period.

Richard Rolle was the greatest of these. He was the most prolific—more manuscripts of his works remain than of those of any other medieval English writer. He reached the highest pinnacle of prayer, when the soul is " ravished to behold heavenly things " and to enjoy in a peculiar manner a foretaste of the Beatific Vision whilst yet bound in the flesh. In his works he strives vigorously to convey some sense of his experiences and his conception of perfect life to those for whom he writes, and the result is, inevitably, language of great beauty and power. His writings were spread all over Europe; they were amongst the earliest printed books in every centre of learning, and the

more important have been reprinted at irregular intervals, down to the present day. His personal reputation for wisdom and sanctity drew thousands of visitors to him, it is said, from all Christian countries.

Rolle's longer and better-known works were written in Latin, as were most spiritual treatises in his day. Contrary to a long-cherished belief in this country, the Scriptures had been frequently presented in the vernacular throughout the ages, but theological and devotional works were almost invariably written in Latin. Ecclesiastical Latin had become the recognized medium for such works, and by constant use for that purpose it had gained a malleability in the hands of medieval scholars which they could not expect to find in the vernacular tongue.

Rolle, with characteristic originality and enthusiasm, began to write also in English. He was the first to do so to any appreciable extent since the Conquest—that is, he was the first to write in that amalgam of Old English, Norman-French, and Latin which was the basis of modern English. On this account he has been called the Father of English Prose. He first began to give a written form to what was only spoken ; he began to formalize the spelling. Thus, as might be expected, the English spelling is not consistent, and it varies in different manuscripts according to the taste of the copying scribe and his dialect. Nevertheless there is in Rolle's prose a certain character and spirit definitely his own, imposed upon the character of the spoken English which he used for writing. In that sense, since all who wrote in English after him, beginning notably with Wyclif, built on his basis, he may be said to have implanted his character in the language, and so earned the title of Father.

When Wyclif began his translation of the Bible he found ready

to hand Richard Rolle's translation and commentary upon the Psalter and the Canticles, and there is reason to believe that he based his English version upon these. The nuns of Hampole Priory, fearful of the way in which Rolle's work was being appropriated and interpolated by the Lollards, hid away genuine copies of his works for posterity, but posterity never found them.

Hence Rolle holds a position in English literature largely usurped by his more spectacular fellow-countryman and successor, John Wyclif. Wyclif was born in Rolle's neighbourhood; he was a young man of twenty-five, at Oxford, when Rolle died. Like everybody else, he knew of Rolle's work and fame; he had a good deal of Rolle's Yorkshire energy and pioneering spirit; he had, in addition, the environment of learning, and was ostensibly at least a scholar. So he opportunely followed up the work Rolle had begun in his Psalter. The contempt which Rolle had for wranglers and disputers he did not share. Rolle's disgust with unworthy religious he shared in full. Unfortunately he lacked Rolle's humility—the essential virtue in a wise man and the indispensable one to a holy man. He fell into grave errors, assumed the oracle, and gained the notoriety which was magnified a hundredfold after the Reformation when his errors and others became widespread and culminated in Schism. His humility and wisdom came with age, but in the blaze of publicity he had overshadowed Rolle, and Rolle has been left in the shadow ever since. No one familiar with the facts will doubt Rolle's merit and importance. Rolle himself would have denied them both. But he would rejoice that men should read his works with a humble and aspiring mind, for he wrote them, as Richard Misyn later translated two of them, "for the information of Christian Souls."

INTRODUCTION

Richard, the son of William Rolle, was born about the year 1300, probably at Thornton-le-dale, near Pickering, certainly in North Yorkshire. His parents were comparatively poor, but by their efforts and the assistance of Master Thomas de Neville, Archdeacon of Durham, he was sent to Oxford. Education was never so accessible to all classes as it was in the Middle Ages. In the same century William of Wykeham, himself a peasant's son assisted in his education by a patron, was to found the Public School system with Winchester and New College, which were free schools for *pauperes et indigentes*.

At Oxford, in the age just following Dante and Aquinas—the age which gave birth to Wykeham, Wyclif and Chaucer—Richard had access to the cream of medieval culture. Scholars from all over Europe were there to learn, to teach and to dispute : the echoes of Ockham and Duns Scotus had not yet died away. From Oxford he is said to have returned to Yorkshire at the age of eighteen and become a hermit, having fled the seat of learning in impatience with the disputes of the schoolmen or in rebellion against the discipline. But there is no reason to doubt the records in Paris—early eighteenth-century copies of the lists of alumni and writers at the Sorbonne—wherein he is said to have lived there at least from 1320 to 1326. He is referred to in *The English Martyrologie*, by " A Catholick Priest " (1608), as " Blessed Richard Rolle, Confessor and Hermit, whose singular spirit of piety and devotion is left written and manifest to the world by his own works yet extant. He was first a Doctor, and then leaving the world . . ."

It is very likely that he went to Paris and took his Doctorate there. The University of Paris had long been popular with the English since its first charter had been obtained from the Pope by

an Englishman, Robert, Cardinal Curzon of Kedleston, in 1211. Rolle refers in his writings to the translation of St Maglorius which took place in Paris when, according to the Sorbonne records, he would have been there.

No record of Rolle's ordination as a priest has yet appeared, and it has been generally assumed that he was not ordained. Since there is no definite evidence either way it must remain an open question. He would certainly receive the tonsure on entering Oxford as a student—he may have received minor orders, but again we do not know. It does seem improbable that he would have been allowed to preach freely, even on his first reappearance at a parish church in Yorkshire, and to act as spiritual counsellor to nuns and recluses, without ecclesiastical status or authority, as the only English record of his life suggests. His education at Paris and his Doctorate, if he gained it, might well have been accepted as a qualification, coupled with his evident sanctity. But this last would not be recognized officially in the beginning of his life as a hermit. It is more probable that he was a priest or a Doctor of Theology at Paris, or both.

The standard source of information about Rolle, apart from his works, is the Office and records, drawn up in anticipation of his Canonization which never took place—probably owing to the conflict between the English Crown and the Papacy and the unstable position of the Papal Court in the half-century immediately following the death of the hermit. The Office has been attributed (on very scanty evidence) to the Cistercian nuns of Hampole Priory, but it is significant that it is not conventual. It was apparently compiled soon after his death, from memory, by those who had known him in his later years. If, as is likely, he was not the man to speak of his early days or scholastic

successes—he expressly discounts mere learning or academic honours as an aid to the sanctity which is alone worth living for—then we may readily understand that the records of his life during his absence from Yorkshire are incomplete. The story of his return has the spirit of popular legend and would survive. Let us consider it briefly.

Soon after Richard returned home he decided to give effect to the plan, already no doubt matured in his mind, of leaving the world to become a hermit. He arranged for his sister to bring to him, at a wood near by, two of her garments, one white and one grey, and his father's rain-hood. With these he made his hermit's habit, put it on and fled, his sister having by this time concluded, not unreasonably, that he was mad, and shouted to the house for help.

The hermit made his way to a church, probably Topcliffe, on the Vigil of the Assumption, and entered it to pray, taking the seat of the local squire's lady. The servants would have turned him out, but the lady stopped them. After vespers her sons recognized him as William Rolle's son, whom they had known at Oxford. On the morning of the Feast he entered the church and, without asking leave, put on a surplice and sang matins and the proper of the Mass with the rest. After the gospel he asked the priest's blessing and permission to preach, which was granted. And it is recorded that he preached a very good sermon, of great virtue and power.

After Mass the lady's husband, John de Dalton, invited the young man to dinner—he was a friend of his father. Here we may observe that had Rolle been but eighteen, Dalton would probably have returned him to his father. Richard, after hiding in "a mean and old room," was found, and set by his host above

his own sons at table. But he refused to speak, and even attempted to leave before the meal was over. The squire detained him, and after dinner extracted a very reluctant account of himself and his behaviour. Dalton wisely decided that any attempt at interference with the plans of such a determined and eccentric young man would fail, so he provided the new hermit with suitable clothing, and a hermitage, and supplied him with the necessaries of life.

Then began the period of purgation and preparation for the sublime ecstasies of which he tells in *The Fire of Love*. Here in the hermitage near the Daltons he watched and fasted and prayed until, having been marvellously purified and uplifted, he was impelled to wander and preach and write.

His first abandonment of the world must have been a great disappointment to his parents and Master Thomas de Neville, his patron, who had no doubt made sacrifices—certainly his parents had done so—in the hope of seeing him gain preferment in the Church. If they lived to see his sanctity they would not regret his early defection. His own action throughout discloses a ruthless and headstrong nature ; he saw his way and he would take it, family and social ties notwithstanding. He was concerned to do only one thing—follow his vocation as he saw it.

He tells us that his childhood was vain, his youth foolish and his adolescence unclean. Very likely. Elsewhere he speaks of his early sinfulness. This may or may not mean that he sowed his wild oats in the traditional manner. In view of his later sanctity it does not matter very much. His own statements, in these terms, convey little. They may have been the customary self-recriminations of the Saint. To one who has had a special experience of God and an appreciation of Divine Goodness

beyond that of most men the smallest evil must seem enormously sinful and hateful, and need far stronger language than it would evoke from the average sinner. The smallest sin is so repellent and offensive to God, and hence to the inspired saint in whom God dwells especially, that it must appear, comparatively, but little less than one of the Seven Deadly Sins.

Whatever else Rolle's early days were they were certainly rebellious: he went to be a hermit against his father's wish, he appears to have been not a little truculent with the Daltons. Piety and sanctity notwithstanding, he did not submit to the rule of a religious order or the discipline of the secular priesthood in a parish. He would be a religious but he would make his own rule, even his own habit. The habit was ridiculous even for a hermit; the Daltons felt obliged to provide him with suitable clothing—ascetical and hard, no doubt, as was his cell, befitting a hermit. But he cast off his clothing as he cast off the old man, like Francis, in a moment and for ever. He chose the solitary life to be alone with God; he could not suffer the restraint or distractions of mankind to interfere with this most important business of getting to know God. Others might be satisfied with a normal existence and might save their souls in that way; for him there was only one way, to "sit by himself alone." We need not assume that he was influenced to do this by the hermits and solitaries who had preceded him. It looks as if he saw his way as it were suddenly, and decided to follow it. Certainly his rule of life was his own—its very flexibility is individual and characteristic, for he broke cloister and moved whenever he felt it was necessary.

"I have dwelt among them that have flourished in the world and I have taken their food. I have heard flatterings. . . . But

casting off these for a single purpose, my soul is taken up with the love of my Maker." [1]

When the hermit had lived for some two years and eight or nine months in his cell near the Daltons, in contemplation, study and mortification, he began to receive the spiritual experiences which inflamed the rest of his life and confirmed him in sanctity whilst yet on earth. They were such that after them, although theoretically sin is never impossible to man so long as he lives, it is for all practical purposes impossible. "He that has this joy and is thus gladdened in this life is inspired of the Holy Ghost, and may not err. Whatever he may do, it is lawful. No mortal man may give him such good counsel as that which he has in himself of the Immortal God. . . . *But let no man be of such great presumption that he suppose himself to be such a one.*" He received such an experience of God, Infinite Beauty and Infinite Goodness, he saw Him so plainly with the eyes of his soul, that henceforth sin and evil were so utterly abhorrent to him as to render him practically incapable of yielding to them. He became, in very truth, dead to the world. But he knew that death as the beginning of another life. Henceforth being sanctified he would be Christ-like, and so now live indeed in the sight of God. Now he would cry with St Paul: "And I live now, not I, but Christ liveth in me."

These experiences Richard Rolle describes in terms of Heat, Song and Sweetness. He is conscious all the time of the impossibility of describing the indescribable. We should be very foolish to expect to understand such experiences from the imperfect descriptions we are given. We may gain some faint impression, but little more.

[1] *Fire of Love*, Bk. I., chap. xv.

"And in the process of time great progress in spiritual joy was given to me. Three years, except three or four months, elapsed from the beginning of the changing of my life and mind and the opening of the heavenly door so that, the veil being removed, the eye of my heart might behold heavenly things and see in what way it might seek my Love and eagerly desire Him."[1]

This reference in *The Fire of Love* is to the first spiritual experience of an unusual character that came to Rolle. The period of nearly three years' preparation culminated in "the opening of the heavenly door"—he saw things in a dazzling new light, and by that light he saw his way more clearly. He continued to experience this revelation of the Divine purpose and of his vocation for a whole year, and then :

"I sat forsooth in a chapel, and whilst I was greatly delighted with the sweetness of prayer[2] or meditation, suddenly I felt within myself a merry and strange heat. But though at first I wavered, doubting of whom it should be, in course of time I became aware that it was not of a creature but of my Maker, for I found it grow more hot and more delectable. In that truly sweet-savouring and unexpected heat I was occupied for half a year, three months and some weeks, with the inpouring and receiving of heavenly or spiritual sound, which belongs to the songs of everlasting praise and the sweetness of melodies unheard —for it may not be known or heard but by him who receives it, whom it behoves to be pure and quit of the earth.

"Whilst I sat in the same chapel in the night, before supper, I sang psalms, as I might, and I heard above me the noise as it

[1] *Fire of Love*, Bk. I., chap. xv.

[2] Prayer is the raising up of the mind and heart to God—not necessarily oral. Meditation was Rolle's common form of prayer.

were of readers or rather singers. Whilst I took heed, praying to heaven with all desire, in what manner I know not suddenly I received a most pleasant heavenly melody dwelling within me in my mind. Indeed, my thought was continuously changed into mirth of song, and I had, as it were, praises in my meditation, and in saying prayers and psalms I gave forth the same sound. And so henceforward I burst out singing what I formerly said, but privily indeed, because I was alone before my Maker. I was not observed by those who saw me, as peradventure if they had understood they would have honoured me beyond measure. . . ."

It would be futile to attempt to explain further the nature of Rolle's experience. It is here expressed in simple language as well as he can express it himself, and we may take his word for it that it may not be known but by him who receives it. He was alone with his Maker. The experience was his, and he should know. Nor do we gain anything by attempting to analyse the experience or place our own fanciful interpretations upon it. We may profit more by its outward effect, which was to inspire Rolle to tell us what he has told us in his works. Its inner effect was Rolle's alone. We do not gain and we cannot achieve such experiences ourselves by knowing their nature, but only by the method which Rolle teaches and which all the favoured ones—Teresa of Jesus, John of the Cross, Catherine of Siena, Henry Suso, Julian of Norwich, and others—teach us. They, too, had their divine moments of intimate experience of, and union with, God. They, too, have attempted to describe the experiences for our edification. But in every case it is a tale told for our wonder and for our stimulation rather than for our understanding. The words that Rolle and the other saints have used are but feeble

vehicles for expressing the inexpressible. They cannot bear the load. They are the nearest the saint can get in human terms to a description of something superhuman. But the failure of the words, their imperfections and limitations are no evidence against the reality of the experience they describe. It is not unreasonable to assume, on the contrary, that the experience which gives birth to the words may have more actuality and reality than any description of it.

In reading the works of saints and poets there is a danger of taking them too literally, of measuring the experience or the message strictly by the words used to convey it, confining the breath of inspiration to the words alone, missing what comes over and through the words in spite of their stiffness and inadequacy.

To many the descriptions of a saint's rare spiritual experiences and visions naturally appear fanciful, and in their language trivial. They are often illogical and inconsistent. Rolle himself is rarely logical. But we can be certain that what they attempt to describe is something rarer and greater than the descriptions convey. The very poverty of the description suggests that it has literally beggared description. It is probable that we can no more get at the ultimate reality by examining the saint's account than we can get at the soul by analysing the body.

Let us observe that Rolle mistrusts his experience and treats it with proper caution. But its continuance and intensity leave him in no doubt as to its reality and its source. He is afraid to give any outward indication of his state, for he knows that only those who have such an experience will understand it. The rest will think him mad, or a *poseur*—just at the moment when he knows he is pre-eminently sane and filled with a profound consciousness of his own unworthiness. He says:

"The marvel caught me that I was taken up to such great mirth whilst I was in exile, and because God gave me gifts that I could not ask for, nor had I supposed any man, even the most holy, to have received any such thing in this life. Therefore I suppose this to be given to none for merit but freely to whom Christ wills."

The same humility and the same suspicion are found in all the men and women who have had such visions as Rolle's. It is very clearly expressed by Dame Julian of Norwich, whose visions or revelations were of a different nature, but gave rise in their effect to an exposition of Divine Love similar to that of Rolle. Dame Julian suspected the reality of her visions, but her conviction of their reality was strengthened after many years of meditation and contemplation, in cold blood comparatively speaking. Humility and suspicion or a reverent agnosticism are the two great safeguards against error and delusion in the search for truth in both the spiritual and material spheres. The scientist must always suspect his findings and never lose consciousness of his own liability to error. The things of the spirit which appear incomprehensible to and are therefore contemned by "modern" science—that is, the fashionable pseudo-science of the age—are not to be probed by a scientific method which demands an implicit faith in its own premises and has no doubt of its own soundness. The science of psychology, in its modern condition, is too confident and too cold to extract the gold from the rich mine of the lives of saints and poets.

We need not hope to understand Rolle unless we approach him with a sympathetic mind. The critical temper has no place in the realm of revelation and inspiration. These are the gift of Divine Love, by hypothesis superhuman, and therefore not

subject to the analysis of the stumbling and fallible human mind. For the Gift which we can neither claim nor deserve we must make our minds receptive, for the understanding of phenomena they must be analytical, critical and perceptive. There is no evading Rolle's own declaration that the Gift is such that he *could not even ask for*, that it is given to none for merit, but freely to whom Christ wills.

Rolle's experiences left him a changed man. The Heat had indeed cleansed his lips like Isaiah's with a burning coal, the Song had made plain to his mind the hidden meanings in the Word of God, the Sweetness had filled him with a consciousness of his own sanctity, a Divine and imperishable Hope, sure and certain. His mind is filled to overflowing, he must give of this great overplus to his neighbour whom he loves, he must go forth and tell the world, as well as he can, of the Love of God.

His message, therefore, is a simple one. But it is too divinely simple for the human reason, and so he must expound it. He gives it to us, briefly, in the form that it has always been given by saints and wise men to the world, as it was given even by Gargantua, who was no saint, to his son Pantagruel :

" As the wise man Solomon saith, wisdome entereth not into a malicious minde ; and that knowledge without conscience is but the ruine of the soule, it behooveth thee to serve, to love and to feare God, and on Him to cast all thy thoughts and all thy hope, and by faith formed in charity to cleave unto Him, so that thou mayest never be separated from him by thy sins. Suspect the abuses of the world : set not thy heart upon vanity ; for this life is transitory, but the Word of the Lord endureth for ever. Be serviceable to all thy neighbours, and love them as thy self: . . . shun the conversation of those whom thou desirest

not to resemble, and receive not in vaine the graces which God hath bestowed upon thee."

But it is not the purpose here to give Rolle's message. He gives it himself in his works better than it can be given for him. He is simple and straightforward in language and in expression, and needs no interpreter.

Since the Love of God demands a man's whole heart, soul, mind and strength, Rolle chose the contemplative life of a hermit secluded from his fellows. But he must mix with them to teach them and preach to them. He therefore effects a compromise, remaining a hermit in his habit of life but moving the locus of his hermitage when necessary. He finds that if he remains too long in one place he becomes too familiar with his neighbours, and they with him.

"From divers people also I have gone, not because they fed me commonly or in a hard manner, but because we have not accorded in manners or for some other reasonable cause. Nevertheless I dare say with blessed Job : 'Fools have despised me, and when I would have gone from them they have backbitten me.' Nevertheless they shall be ashamed when they see me, who have said that I would not abide except where I was delicately fed."

Local gossip hurts him keenly—he complains in several places about his backbiters and slanderers. He might well expect that. He never spared the weaknesses of others and was always particularly severe on delinquent and deficient religious and secular priests or "proud prelates." It is not surprising that he received the ecclesiastical censure of which he complained, though there is no reason to believe that any of this occasioned his Bishop to call for bell, book and candle. There is at least no record of

severe disciplinary measures against him. It is true that he did not deserve any, but that would not necessarily deter a superior stung to indignation by his criticisms. Rolle was extremely sensitive about criticism and censure—naturally enough when he had such a profound conviction of the necessity and justice of his own utterance. It was not by any means that he was a prig or conceited in this. Evidently he was respected; certainly after his visions he was inspired; why should he not speak his mind against evil wherever he found it? He often reminds us, and no doubt incidentally himself, that it is not for us to judge others. It has been said foolishly that, because he reproved bad monks and friars, Rolle did not approve of monks and friars. He often warned them against the grave danger of wearing the habit of holiness over an evil life. He had a furious hatred of hypocrisy.

He continued to fast and pray, though for a time he wandered, and finally settled down to live by the nunnery at Hampole, near Doncaster, where he gave holy counsel to the nuns and all who came to him. He died there in 1349, on the Feast of St Michael the Archangel.

The chief qualities of Rolle as we see them in his works and in what we know of his life are his sanctity, his vigour and his sweet reasonableness. For a contemplative he was surprisingly reasonable and well balanced in his judgments and advice on the practical side of life. The extreme teachings and hard sayings of the great ascetics are noticeably absent from his advice to others, though there is no doubt about his own asceticism and severity of life.

There is an important sanity in his teaching on fasting. He persistently utters warnings against excessive mortification, particularly in youth, because of the danger of weakening the body

and reducing its efficiency in the service of God. He often speaks of the danger of external mortification and penance in giving an appearance of holiness greater than the penitent has in fact achieved. There must be a measure in all things and there is a commendable mean :

"The true lover of Christ, taught by Christ, with no less study guards against too much as against too little. He shall be beyond comparison more worthy who with joyful songs prays, meditates, reads and thinks, eating well but discreetly, rather than if without this he should always fast, eating bread alone, or herbs, and busily praying and reading. I have eaten and drunk of what seemed best, not because I loved pleasure, but because nature should be sustained in the service of God and in the praise of Jesus Christ. [I did this] conforming myself to them with whom I dwelt in a proper manner for Christ, that I should not feign holiness where none is nor men praise me too much where I was little to be praised."

The body must not be weakened so that it cannot stand long prayers and meditations, do its normal work, and resist temptations. This doctrine sounds strangely reasonable coming from a stern ascetic and uncompromising preacher. It has had a modern parallel in our own day in *Health and Holiness* — Francis Thompson's study of the relations between Brother Ass the Body and its Rider the Soul. Thompson had much in common with Richard Rolle—in his spontaneous lyric song, in his single mind, his solitary, tempestuous character, and his theme of Divine Love.

The chief picture of Richard Rolle in one of the Cotton manuscripts shows him sitting:

"I have loved to sit," he says, "not for penance nor for fancy that I wished men to speak of me, nor for any such thing ;

but only because I loved God more and the comfort of love lasted longer with me than when moving or standing or kneeling. For sitting I am most at rest and my heart is most uplifted. But peradventure it is not best for another to sit, as I have done and will do until my death, unless he were disposed as I am, in his soul."

Here we have another instance of the utter reasonableness of the man. He does not do things because they are done, or because others have done them, such as excessive fasting and always kneeling in prayer. He is careful to subject his methods to the achievement of the best results. He therefore boldly goes his own way, despite criticism. Yet he is always careful to add that what is good for him may not be good for everyone else. Each must decide for himself, and it behoves no man to say that another's method is wrong.

It is recorded in the Office that when Richard was sitting in contemplation his cloak was taken from him and mended, and then put back without his being aware of it. On another occasion when the lady of the house near which he was living came to his cell with many other persons to seek his advice, he spoke to them "most eloquently" for two hours, *yet he never ceased writing*, but continued quickly as before. This capacity for doing two things at once is not unknown to-day. Such a rare phenomenon must have added greatly to the attraction of Rolle's personality for his contemporaries. They said he did it by the power of the Holy Spirit, who directed both his hand and his tongue. And they had at least good reason for that.

Rolle was essentially a contemplative. He has no doubt of the necessity of the contemplative life to his own perfection and salvation. Often he speaks so strongly about it that we might

suppose him to believe that it is the only way to Heaven. Then he pulls himself up and makes a few concessions to those who are in active life. He goes so far as to say that a good active life is as good as a contemplative life, but he fears it is more dangerous and risky, and in a sense more difficult. Then, fearing that he has gone too far, he says that the best contemplative life is, however, higher than the best active.

Yet he himself was never content to remain purely contemplative. He travelled about his native country very actively, teaching and exhorting all he could find to listen to him. He acted as counsellor to many religious and recluses. He wrote voluminously. Not only did he write to express his inspired message of Divine Love, but he must needs adopt the unusually arduous and enterprising task of translating and expounding the Scriptures.

Vast numbers of works have been variously attributed to Rolle which recent investigation has shown to be by his contemporaries or followers. He was known only, until a few years ago, as the author of *The Prick of Conscience*, a work having very little in common, beyond its piety, with his typical and authentic writings. It is a poem nearly ten thousand lines long, a monument of industry, if not of inspiration or erudition. Unless Richard Rolle's characteristic works become more widely known he may well go down to history henceforth as " the man who did not write *The Prick of Conscience*." Scholars seem to be agreed that he did not. Very likely they are right. They do not seem to know who did write it.

There has been some discussion amongst scholars as to what works are Rolle's and what are not. But such discussions are of no more than academic value. To us who seek to know Rolle and understand his works it will not matter very much if

we innocently regard as his the works, to quote an old joke, of "another man of the same name." On the whole, authorities are fairly well agreed on the principal works attributed to him, and if in accepting the majority opinion we mistakenly attribute to Rolle a work which, though certainly like his, was written by a disciple or imitator, there will be no great harm done. A preoccupation with the niceties of the discussions on authorship and textual details has prevented more than one scholar from seeing the wood for the trees. We may take consolation from the fact that Rolle did not write for scholars but for those who would learn from him and follow him.

Richard Rolle has but one very simple theme throughout all his works. It is the Love of God. The same theme pervades the works of those who followed him in being granted special spiritual experiences and visions and in writing about them for the wonder of the world. Rolle was, in point of time, the first of a group of English spiritual writers on the same eternal theme —the author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*, Walter Hilton, Dame Julian of Norwich, and others.

Beyond the fact that they probably read Rolle's works, there does not appear to be much connection between them and him. The special inspiration or spiritual experience, whether of physical visitations or visions, cannot be gained by study or by contemplating the experiences and visions of others. It is essentially individual, though the individual may receive guidance as to preparation. But the preparation itself does not appear to lead inevitably to the experience, no matter how intense and even perfect it may be. The experience and the vision are given to the chosen, if we may believe Rolle, and they are not to be had for the most fervent and worthy asking. His opinion may be extreme, dis-

counting as it does the promise to answer prayer, but it may well be more generally true. There seems to be no reason whatever to suppose that special sanctity and the intimate experience of the Godhead which are granted to some saints on earth are progressive or connected in a group of saints, or that these things are in any way capable of classification. Why should they be so? The classification and the habit of regarding things progressively are no more than the offshoots of a passing scientific manner.

As to whether Rolle derived anything from the Fathers, from Augustine, from St Edmund Rich, the Victorines Hugh and Richard, Bonaventure, it is more to the profit of scholars than ourselves to inquire. Without doubt all writers unconsciously absorb something of the ideas and spirit of the authors they read, the more so if they find them good and admire them. That there should be some unconscious, or even conscious, reflection of this in their own works is not surprising, nor does it necessarily indicate derivation or development of their work from others. The old thoughts come forward into a new world and receive a new lease of life, being born again. It is enough for us to be concerned, for the present, with the works of Richard Rolle as we find them.

When we realize that Rolle is constantly trying to express the inexpressible we need not be surprised that we sometimes fail to understand him. His repetition, seemingly excessive, is due to his unceasing attempts to express what he knows he has never expressed adequately. He is limited by his medium of language and is constantly wrestling with the plasticity or lack of plasticity of his medium. He began by writing in Latin, a language already made plastic to some extent by long use for this particular purpose. But it was a medium that could not convey his message

to the common people, his fellows, whom he loved. Hence he wrote for them in the vernacular.

Even before we have considered Rolle's pioneering difficulties with the language his writings are a remarkable achievement. The English works were written mainly for the edification of religious, but with an eye on the general reader. His monumental commentary on the Psalms and Canticles was written for everybody. His language being that of his own folk is, like them, strong and vigorous, rather less diluted with Latin and French than the writings of those who soon followed him, such as John Wyclif and Geoffrey Chaucer.

He tells us in the prologue to the translation and commentary on the Psalter : " In this work I speak no strange English but the easiest and commonest. In the translation I follow the letter as much as I can, and where I find not the proper English I follow the wit of the word. In the expounding I follow holy doctors. . . ."

Rolle is essentially a poet ; his language is poetic, and he bursts into lyric verse as the spirit moves him. His verse is, by modern standards, crude and irregular. He was not writing the laboured poetry of the poetaster for fame as a poet. His verse is the rushing forth of the melody that is within him, a melody of inspiration, however feebly the expression of it may read. That inward melody gives music to his prose ; it is partly expressed in the alliteration, and even the repetitions, which strike one on first reading as redundancies, are afterwards seen as part of a larger rhythm.

Favourite words recur in Rolle's writings that are eloquent of the man's character. " Stable " and " stalwart " are two of them, and he yearns " to sit in a settle of joy with angels."

INTRODUCTION

"For love is stalwart as death and hard as hell—stalwart as death that slays all living things, and hard as hell that spares not them that are dead. And he that loves God perfectly grieves not whatever anguish or shame he suffers, but he has delight, and desires to be worthy to suffer torment and pain for the love of Christ. . . . As a dead man, whatsoever men do or say, he answers not. Just so they that love perfectly are not disturbed by anything that men do or say. For they cannot love that cannot suffer pain and anguish for their friend's love. And who so love, they have no pain."

Had Richard Rolle lived to-day and signified his change of life by taking his sister's skirts to make a hermit's habit, he would have died of exposure. No less certainly will any attempt to fit Richard Rolle's writings into the scheme of "modern" thought and "modern" literature result in failure. For his thoughts which he seeks to express in words are the soul of his work. His words are intended to be no more than the expression of his thoughts. And these are not of time but of eternity, for they are of God.

G. C. HESELTINE.

TRANSCRIBER'S NOTE

THE version of Richard Rolle's Works here published is to be regarded as a translation rather than a literal transcription or a modernization in the customary manner. I have endeavoured to give first what I take to be Rolle's meaning in a form which is as unequivocal and easy to read as I can make it. To this end it has often been necessary to depart entirely from Rolle's own phraseology, and on that account many long passages in this transcription will look quite unlike the original version.

I decided to take what many scholars may well regard as liberties with the text, for several reasons. For example, it is not known which, if any, of the surviving manuscripts are in Rolle's hand or which are the more exact copies of his original manuscripts. There are many variations in the manuscripts, but except where Lollard interpolations are suspected these do not, as a rule, seriously affect the general purport of the text. It is obvious, therefore, that a close adherence to any one text would not necessarily be any more accurate or valuable than a free extraction of a sort of highest common factor from several authenticated texts.

My method has been to take as a basis the most complete and legible text available, being guided as to authenticity mainly, but not entirely, by Miss Hope Emily Allen's comprehensive study of *The Writings Ascribed to Richard Rolle and Materials for his Biography* (1927), this being by far the most exhaustive and

most recent work on the subject. Obscure passages in the basic text I have endeavoured to elucidate by reference to other texts. Finally, I have checked my transcription by comparison with as many manuscripts as I could find to collate. In the case of *The Mending of Life* I based my transcription on Richard Misyn's translation (1434) and then checked it by manuscript and early printed Latin versions. On the whole, I have sought to ensure that the final transcription, even in doubtful passages, does not differ from any one of the earlier versions more than they differ from one another.

The language of this transcription has been entirely subordinated to the sense. I have nevertheless endeavoured to convey in my own words some of the strength and character of Rolle's prose. In the case of his verse (which is printed in italics), I have found it necessary to resort to wholesale paraphrase of the text. The original verse combines many lines of great beauty with lines of irregular scansion and crude rhyme and an altogether primitive poetic licence.

My reason for departing so far from the original language is that many Middle English constructions are so involved as to be unintelligible and even misleading if left in anything like their original form. For example, amongst the sins of commission, Rolle includes, "*To covayte to syn or*" (and in other versions "*ar*" and "*are*") "*he be temped*," which has in fact been transcribed "to desire to sin or to be tempted." This makes Rolle appear to be unorthodox, for the Church never held it a sin to be tempted. Rolle's general orthodoxy is particularly sound. It is therefore much more probable that "or," "ar" and "are" are meant for "ere," and he means to say that it is a sin "to desire to sin before one is tempted."

TRANSCRIBER'S NOTE

It is possible to keep a large proportion of original words and still leave the text easy to read for a student or a reader with a fairly intimate knowledge of English literature. My aim, however, has been to produce a version that the average reader of devotional works may understand without reference to glossaries and without having the sense of the text withheld or suspended by an archaic manner. Rolle ought to be as accessible to English readers as the Bible, *The Imitation of Christ*, the *Fioretti* of St Francis, the *Confessions of St Augustine*, and the rest. Rolle's own prose, so far as we can know it for his from the manuscripts, is often supremely fit, but it is also sometimes confused and quite often unnecessarily Latinized. Misyn's prose translation is altogether too literally Latin to be worth saving intact.

With one possible exception, previous attempts to make Rolle accessible have suffered severely from too great a regard for the original diction. Although in nearly every case the modernizer has claimed to retain only the old words lingering in use, it is to be feared that the estimate of the general reader's knowledge of old English words has been too optimistic. Thus we find, to choose a few examples at random, such passages as the following:—

"*death sicker, the chance of death unsicker . . .*"

"*worship of God in conable time*"

"*cruelty of deed ravisheth wretches*"

"*they unbiden till after the death*"

"*when I had taken my singular purpose*"

"*but truly it is said that love leads that din*"

"*This thinketh we were ghostly comfort and sweetness in a man's soul for to have cleanness of heart by mighty forsaking of sin, meek hope, and a full desire to God.*"

"*In our prayers angels stye up.*"

A text full of such passages, even when partly assisted by a glossary, is almost worthless, because it defeats its own purpose, which is to convey Rolle's thoughts to the reader. Any attempt to guess at the meaning is more than likely to result in a misunderstanding, especially when such words as *sicker*, *singular*, *unbiden*, *din*, *stye*, and so on, do not mean anything like the modern word nearest to them in spelling.

This affection for old words has led also to such mistranscriptions as "*in sore manners*" for "*in sere manere*," meaning "*in various (or several) ways*"; "*deed*" for "*dede*" when it means "*death*"; "*devilish*" for "*heleful*," meaning "*saving*" or "*healthful*"; "*love*" for "*loue*," meaning "*praise*"; "*need*" for "*mede*," meaning "*reward*" or "*merit*," the context dispelling any question of a misprint; "*empty*" for "*ayth*," meaning "*eight*" (the Latin version being "*octo*" and the sense demanding a numeral); and so on. Then words like "*unbuxomnes*," "*wit*," "*ghostly*," "*wilful*," "*pass*," rarely convey in modern English the meaning they conveyed in Middle English—they are usually better represented, for example, by "disobedience," "knowledge," "spiritual," "voluntary" and "excel." To preserve such words, as they have been preserved in almost every case in recent modernizations, is confusing to the general reader, and does violence to the meaning. Preserving the archaic flavour to the detriment of intelligibility is a profitless pedantry and it has no practical value.

TRANSCRIBER'S NOTE

Misyn's method of translating *exultatio*, *jubilatio*, *gaudium* and *gloria* indiscriminately as "joy," and *ardor*, *fervor* and *calor* as "heat," and *honor*, *gloria* and *laus* as "worship," may also be improved upon.

Here and there a phrase or passage remains obscure. Rolle himself found it as difficult as the rest of us to make sense of many passages in the Old Testament in the form in which they have reached us. Rolle used a text of the Vulgate differing slightly from the standard text. Other obscurities are probably due to errors by scribes in copying the manuscripts, or to allusions whose significance is not now traceable.

I am indebted to Bodley's Librarian and staff, the Superintendent and staff of the British Museum Reading and Manuscript Rooms, to Professor J. L. Myres, archivist of New College, the Librarian of Magdalen College and the Marquess of Salisbury and his librarian for the free and ready access they have afforded me to the manuscripts. I am also indebted to Miss Hope Emily Allen for the comprehensive information on manuscripts and texts in *Writings ascribed to Richard Rolle*, and to Dom Noetinger, O.S.B., of Solesmes, for the biographical information in the introduction to *Le Feu de l'Amour et autre Œuvres de Richard Rolle*.

Finally, I am grateful to Dom Justin McCann, O.S.B., and Mr Philip Hereford for their kindness in reading the proofs and suggesting improvements. Since I have not always taken advice I hope it will be clearly understood that the errors and obscurities remaining are my own unaided work.

G. C. H.

THE COMMANDMENT

THE COMMANDMENT

(Written for a Cistercian nun of Hampole Priory.)

THE Commandment of God is that we love Our Lord with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our thought.

With all our heart, that is with all our understanding, without erring. With all our soul, that is with all our will, without gainsaying. With all our thought, that is that we think on Him, without forgetting. In this manner is very love and true, that is the work of man's will. For love is a deliberate stirring of our thought towards God, so that it receive nothing that is against the love of Jesus Christ, and that thereby it be enduring in sweetness of devotion. And this is the perfection of this life, to which all deadly sin is contrary and an enemy, but not venial sin. For venial sin does not do away with charity, but only hinders the use and the burning thereof. Hence all that will love God perfectly it behoves not only to flee from all deadly sin but also, as much as they may, all venial sin, in thought and word and deed. And especially to be of little speech—if their silence be occupied with good thoughts it helps greatly to God's love. For babblers and backbiters that damage other men's lives with wicked words, and all that boast their own estate before all others, or that despise any state in which a man may be safe, they have no more sight of the love of God in their souls than the eye of a bat has of the sun. For vain speech and evil words are signs of a vain heart and ill, that is without the grace of God. And he that speaks always what is good, and holds every

man better than himself, shows well that he is stable in goodness in his heart, and full of charity to God and his neighbour.

And that thou mayest win to the sweetness of God's love I set down here three degrees of love in which thou shouldst be ever waxing. The first degree is called Insuperable, the second Inseparable, the third Singular.

Thy love is Insuperable when nothing may overcome it; that is, neither weal nor woe, ease nor anguish, lust of the flesh nor pleasure of this world. But always it perseveres in good thoughts, though it be tempted greatly, and it hates all sin, so that nothing may quench that love.

Thy love is Inseparable when all thy thoughts and desires are gathered together and fixed wholly in Jesus Christ so that thou mayest at no time forget Him but always think on Him. And hence it is called inseparable, for it may not be parted from the thought of Jesus Christ.

Thy love is Singular when all thy delight is in Jesus Christ, and thou dost find joy and comfort in no other thing. In this degree is love stalwart as death and hard as hell. For as death slays all living things in this world, so perfect love slays in a man's soul all fleshly desires and earthly covetousness. And as hell spares nothing to dead men, but torments all that come thereto, so a man that is in this degree of love not only forsakes the wretched solace of this life but also seeks to suffer pains for God's love. Therefore if thou desirest to love anything, love Jesus Christ, who is the fairest, richest, and wisest; whose love endures in endless joy.

For all earthly love passes and soon withers away; naught that falleth thereto remains but the pain that it deserved. If thou art covetous after good, love Him and thou shalt have all good. Desire Him truly and thou shalt want nothing. If thou

dost like delights, love Him, for he gives to his lovers delights that may never perish. But all the delights of this world are faint and false, and fail when they are needed most : they begin in sweetness and their ending is more bitter than gall.

If thou canst not live without fellowship, lift thy thought to heaven that thou mayest find comfort with angels and saints, who will help thee to God and not hinder thee as thy mortal friends do. Restrain thy will a while from all lust and liking of sin, and thou shalt ever afterwards have all thy will. For it shall be cleansed and made so free that thou shalt wish to do nothing but what is pleasing to God. If thou dost wish to speak, forbear at the beginning for God's love. For when thy heart feels delight in Christ, thou wilt not wish to speak or chatter but of Christ.

If thou mayest not dare to sit alone, busy thyself stalwartly in His love and He shall so firmly set thee that all the solace of this world shall not remove thee, for thou wilt not desire thereof. When thou art by thyself be always, till sleep come, either in prayer or good meditation. And order thy praying and thy watching and thy fasting that it be in discretion, not overmuch nor overlittle. But remember always that of all things God most covets the love of man's heart. And therefore seek more to love Him than to do penance, for unskilful penance is worth little or naught. But love is always the best, whether thou dost much penance or little.

Strive with all thy might, that thou art so inwardly given to the love of Jesus Christ that, for ghostly joy in thy soul, nothing that men may do or say can make thee sorry ; so that thy inward thought be fed only on the sweetness of Christ's love, and not on delight in earthly ease, nor on the praise of men when they begin to speak well of thee, nor on idle joy.

Trust in God that He will give to thee what thou prayest of Him skilfully. Skilful prayer is for a Christian man's soul to seek and ask, night and day, that it may love Him verily, feeling comfort and delight in Him, casting out worldly thoughts and evil business. And thou art secure if thou dost covet His love truly and perseveringly, so that no love of the flesh, nor anger of the world, nor speech nor hatred of men draw thee again and cast thee into the business of bodily things. Then thou shalt have His love and find and feel that it is more delectable in an hour than all the wealth that we may see here though we might live to Doomsday. And if thou dost fail and fall for temptations, or for anger or for overmuch love of thy friends, it is no wonder if He hold from thee the thing that thou desirest not truly.

He says that He loves them that love Him, and they that wake early for Him shall find Him. Thou art often waking early—why then dost thou find Him not? Certainly if thou dost seek Him right, thou shalt find Him. But ever whilst thou seekest earthly joy, if thou wakest never so early, Christ thou mayest not find. For He is not found in the land of them that live in fleshly lusts. His Mother, when He was wanted away from her, sought Him weeping, early and late, among His kindred and hers; but she found Him not for all her seeking and her sorrowing till at last she came into the temple: and there she found Him sitting amongst the masters, hearing and answering. So it behoves thee to do, if thou wilt find Him: seek Him inwardly, in the truth and hope and charity of Holy Church—casting out all sin, hating it with all thy heart; for that holds Him from thee and hinders thee that thou mayest not find Him.

The shepherds that sought Him found Him lying in a crib between two beasts—as thou knowest. If thou seekest Him

truly it behoves thee to go in the way of poverty and not of riches. The star led the three kings into Bethlehem, where they found Christ swaddled in clouts simply, as a poor bairn. Thereby understand that whilst thou art in pride and vanity thou findest Him not.

How mayest thou for shame, who art but a servant, with many clothes and rich, follow thy Spouse and thy Lord, Who went in a kirtle; and thou dost trail as much behind thee as all that He had on? Therefore I advise thee to part with them, ere thou and He meet, that He reprove thee not for excess: for He wills that thou shouldst have that which thou hast need of, and no more. He said to His disciples that they should not have as many clothes as two might be sustained with, for to be burdened therewith is excessive concern, which He forbids.

The love of Jesus Christ is a full dear treasure, full delightful joy, and full secure for man to trust in. Hence He will not give it to fools that cannot hold it and keep it tenderly; but He gives it to those who neither for weal nor for woe will let it pass from them, but they will die ere they would wrath Jesus Christ.

And no wise man puts precious liquor in a stinking vessel, but in a clean. So Christ puts not His love in a heart foul with sin and bound in vile lust of the flesh, but in a heart that is fair and clean in virtues. Nevertheless a foul vessel may be made so clean that a very dear thing safely may be put therein. And Jesus Christ often cleanses many a man's soul and makes it able through His grace to receive the delectable sweetness of His love and to be His dwelling-place in holiness: and ever the cleaner it waxes, the more joy and solace of heaven Christ sets therein. Therefore at the first time that a man is turned to God he may

not feel that sweet liquor till he has been well employed in God's service and his heart is purged through prayers and penance and good thoughts in God. For he that is slow in God's service may not be burning in love, unless he put forth all his might and labour night and day to fulfil God's will.

And when that blessed love is in a man's heart it will not suffer him to be idle, but always it stirs him to do some good that might be pleasing to God—as in praying or in working profitable things, or in speaking of Christ's passion ; and principally in thought, that the memory of Jesus Christ pass not from his mind. For if thou dost love Him truly thou wilt be glad in Him and in no other thing ; and thou wilt think on Him, casting away all other thoughts. But if thou be false and take other than Him, and delight in earthly things against His will, know well He will forsake thee as thou hast done Him and damn thee for thy sin.

Wherefore, that thou mayest love Him truly, understand that the love of Him is proved in three things : in thinking, in speaking, in working. Change thy thought from the world and cast it wholly on Him, and He shall nourish thee. Change thy mouth from unseemly and worldly speech and speak of Him, and He shall comfort thee. Change thy hands from the works of vanity and lift them in His name, and work only for His love, and He shall receive thee. Do thus, and then thou lovest truly and goest in the way of perfection. Delight so in Him that thy heart receive neither worldly joy nor worldly sorrow ; and dread no anguish nor suffering, nor mischief nor sickness, that may befall bodily on thee or on any of thy friends, but take it all as God's will and thank Him always for all He sends, so that thou mayest have rest and savour in His love.

For if thy heart be led either with worldly dread or worldly solace, thou art very far from the sweetness of Christ's love. And look well that thou seem not one thing without and be another within, as do hypocrites who are like to a sepulchre that is painted richly without and within it rot stinking bones. If thou hast delight in the name of religion, see that thou hast more delight in the duty that falls to religion. Thine habit says that thou hast forsaken the world, that thou art given to God's service, that thou delightest not in earthly things : see then that it be in thy heart as it seems in men's sight ; for nothing may make thee religious but virtues and cleanness of soul in charity. If thy body be clad without as thine Order desires, see that thy soul be not naked within, which thine Order forbids ; but let thy soul be naked of all vices and warmly wrapped in love and meekness.

Dread the judgments of God, so that thou anger Him not. Establish thy thought in His love, and keep all sins out of thee. Cast away sloth and employ thyself manfully in goodness. Be gracious and meek to all men. Let nothing bring thee to ire or envy. Furnish thy soul fair and make therein a throne of love for God's Son ; and make thy will covetous to receive Him as gladly as thou wouldst be at the coming of a thing that thou loved most of all things. Wash thy thoughts clean with love-tears and burning desire, that He find nothing foul in thee : for His joy is that thou be fair and lovesome in His eyes. The beauty of thy soul that He covets is that thou be chaste and meek, mild and patient, never loth to do His will, ever hating all wickedness.

In all that thou dost, think always to come to the sight of His beauty and set all thine intent upon it that thou mayest come thereto at thine ending. For that ought to be the end of all our

travail, that we evermore, whilst we live here, desire that sight with all our heart and that we long for it always.

Also fasten in thy heart the memory of His passion and of His wounds: great delight and sweetness shalt thou feel if thou dost keep thy thought in mind of the pain that Christ suffered for thee. If thou travailest rightly in His love and desire Him fervently, all temptations and fears of evil thou shalt overcome and trample underfoot, through His grace. For all those He sees in good will to love Him, He helps against their enemies and raises their thoughts above all earthly things so that they may have savour and solace in the sweetness of heaven. Purchase for thyself the well of weeping and cease not till thou hast Him. For in the heart where tears spring, there will the fire of the Holy Ghost be kindled; and thereafter the fire of love that shall burn in thy heart will burn to naught all the rust of sin, and purge thy soul of all filth as clean as gold that is proved in the furnace.

I know nothing that so inwardly shall move thy heart to covet God's love and to desire the joy of heaven and to despise the vanities of this world as steadfast thinking on the suffering and grievous wounds and the death of Jesus Christ. It will raise thy thought above earthly pleasure and make thy heart burning with Christ's love, and purchase to thy soul the delight and savour of heaven.

But peradventure thou wilt say: "I cannot despise the world, I may not find it in my heart to punish my body; and it behoves me to love my fleshly friends and take ease when it comes." If thou art tempted with such thoughts I pray thee consider, from the beginning of the world, where the world's lovers are now, and where are the lovers of God. Surely they were men

and women as we are, and ate, drank and laughed: and the wretches that loved this world took ease to their bodies and lived as they pleased, in the pleasure of their wicked will, and led their days in lust and delights; and in a moment they fell into hell.

Now thou mayest see that they were fools and foul gluttons, that in a few years wasted the endless joy that was ordained for them if they would have done penance for their sins. Thou seest that all the riches of this world and delights vanish away and come to naught. Verily so do all the lovers thereof. For nothing may stand stable on a false ground. Their bodies are given to worms in earth and their souls to the devils of hell. But all that forsook the pomp and the vanity of this life and stood stalwartly against all temptations, and ended in the love of God, they are now in joy and have the heritage of heaven, there to dwell without end, resting in the delight of the sight of God. Because here they sought no more rest nor ease to their body than they had need of.

One thing I advise thee: that thou forget not His name—Jesus—but ponder it in thy heart night and day as thy special and thy dear treasure. Love it more than thy life, root it in thy mind. Love Jesus, for He made thee and bought thee very dearly. Give thy heart to Him, for it is His due. Therefore set thy love on His name Jesus, that is 'Health.' No evil thing may have dwelling in the heart where Jesus is truly kept in mind. For it chases out devils and destroys temptations, puts away wicked fears and vices, and cleanses the thought. Those who truly love it are full of God's grace and virtues, in ghostly comfort in this life, and when they die they are taken up into the orders of angels to see Him in endless joy Whom they have loved. Amen. *Deo Gratias.*

THE FORM OF LIVING

THE FORM OF LIVING

(Written by Blessed Richard the Hermit for Margaret the Anchoress, his beloved disciple.)

Chapter I

In every sinful man or woman that is bound in deadly sin are three wretchednesses which bring them to the death of hell.

The first is default of ghostly strength : they are so weak within their hearts that they may neither stand against the temptations of the fiend, nor may they lift their will to yearn for the love of God and follow it.

The second is use of fleshly desires : because they have no will nor might to stand, they fall into lusts and pleasures of this world, and because they think them sweet they continue to dwell in them, many to the end of their lives, and so they fall into the third wretchedness.

The third wretchedness is the changing of lasting good for a passing delight : that is to say, they give up endless joy for a little joy of this life. If they will turn and rise to penance, God will ordain their dwelling with angels and with holy men. But because they choose the vile sin of this world and have more delight in the filth of their flesh than in the beauty of heaven, they lose both the world and heaven. For he that has not Jesus Christ loses all that he has and all that he is and all that he might get. He is not worthy of life, nor even to be fed with swine's meat. All creatures shall be stirred in vengeance against him at the day of doom.

These wretchednesses that I have told are not only in worldly men or women that practise gluttony or lechery and other apparent sins, but they are also in others that seem to be in penance and in good life. For when the devil, who is enemy to all mankind, sees a man or woman among a thousand turn wholly to God and forsake all the vanities and riches that men who love this world covet, and seek lasting Joy, he has a thousand wiles wherewith he may deceive them. And when he may not bring them into such sins, which might make all men that knew them wonder at them, he beguiles many so privily that often they cannot feel the trap that has taken them.

Some he takes with *error* into which he leads them. Some with *conceit*, when he makes them believe that the thing that they say or do is best, and therefore they will have no counsel of others that are better and wiser: and this is a foul stinking pride, for they would set their wit before all others. Some the devil deceives through *vainglory*, that is idle joy: when any have pride and delight in themselves of the penance that they suffer, of good deeds that they do, or of any virtue that they have; they are glad when men praise them, sorry when men blame them, have envy of them that are spoken better of than themselves. They hold themselves so glorious and so far surpassing the life that other men lead, that they think none should reprehend them in anything that they do or say, and they despise sinful men and others who will not do as they bid them. How mayest thou find a more sinful wretch than such a one? And so much is he the worse in that he knows not that he is evil, and is held and honoured of men as wise and holy.

Some are deceived with *overmuch lust and liking of meat and drink*, when they pass measure and come to excess and have

delight therein, and believe that they sin not and therefore they amend not. And so they destroy the virtues of the soul.

Some are beguiled with *overmuch abstinence from meat and drink and sleep*. That is a temptation of the devil, to make them fall in the midst of their work, so that they bring it not to an end as they should have done if they had known reason and kept discretion. And so they lose their merit for their frowardness. This trap our enemy lays to take us with when we begin to hate wickedness and turn ourselves to God. Then many begin a thing that they may never bring to an end. Then they think that they may do whatsoever their heart is set upon. But often they fall ere they reach half-way, and that thing which they thought was for them is hindering them. For we have a long way to heaven, and as many good deeds as we do, as many prayers as we make, and as many good thoughts as we think in truth and hope and charity, so many paces do we go heavenward. Then if we make ourselves so feeble that we may neither work nor pray as we should, nor think, are we not greatly to blame that fail when we have most need to be stalwart? And well I know that it is not God's will that we do so. For the prophet says: "Lord, I shall keep my strength for Thee!" so that he might sustain God's service to his death-day, and not in a little and in a short time waste it and then lie wailing and groaning by the wall. And the peril is much more than men think. For St Jerome says that he makes an offering of robbery who excessively torments his body with too little meat or sleep. And St Bernard says: "Fasting and watching hinder not ghostly good, but help, if they be done *with discretion*—without that they are vices." Therefore it is not good to punish ourselves so much, and afterwards have no thanks for our deed.

There have been many, and are, who think that all that they do is nothing, unless they practise so much abstinence and fasting that all men speak of them that know them. But often it befalls that ever the more joy and wondering they have outwardly from the praise of men, the less joy they have within of the love of God. In my judgment, they would please Jesus Christ much more if they took upon them for love of Him, thanking and praising Him, to sustain their bodies in His service and to keep themselves from much speech of men—taking whatsoever God sends them for the time and the place, and so giving themselves entirely and perfectly to the love and the praise of that Lord Jesus Christ who wishes to be loved stalwartly and served enduringly; so that their holiness were more visible to God's eye than to man's. For always the better thou art, and the less speech thou hast of men, the more is thy joy before God.

Ah! how great it is to be worthy of praise and be not praised! And what wretchedness it is to have the name and the cloak of holiness and be not so, but cover pride, ire or envy under the clothes of Christ's childhood. A foul thing it is to have pleasure and delight in the words of men who can no more judge what we are in our soul than they can know what we think. For often they say that he or she is in the higher degree that is in the lower; and those they say are in the lower are in the higher. Therefore I hold it but madness to be more glad or sorry, whether they speak good or ill. If we are concerned to hide ourselves from the speech and praise of this world, God will show us the way to His praise and our joy. For it is His joy when we are strengthened to stand against the privy and the open temptation of the devil, and seek nothing but His honour and His praise, that we may praise Him entirely. And that ought to be our

desire, our prayer and our intent, night and day, that the fire of His love kindle our heart and the sweetness of His grace be our comfort and our solace in weal and woe.

Thou hast now heard partly how the fiend deceives, with his subtle crafts, unsuspecting men and women. And if thou wilt act by good counsel and follow holy advice, as I hope that thou wilt, thou shalt destroy his traps and burn in the fire of love all the bands that he would bind thee with ; and all his malice shall turn thee to joy and him to more sorrow. God suffers him to tempt good men for their profit, that they may be the higher crowned when they, through His help, have overcome so cruel an enemy who often both in body and soul confounds many men.

In three ways the devil has power to be in a man. In one way, damaging the gifts that they have by nature, as in dumb men ; and in others, blemishing their thought. In another way, robbing them of the gifts they have by *grace* : and so he is in sinful men whom he has deceived through delight in the world and in their flesh, leading them forth with him to hell. In the third way he torments a man's body, as we read he did to Job. But know thou well if he beguile thee not within, thou needst not dread what he may do to thee without, for he may do no more than God gives him leave to do.

Chapter II

Because thou hast forsaken the solace and the joy of this world and betaken thyself to a solitary life, for the love of God, to suffer tribulation and anguish here and afterwards to come to that bliss that nevermore ends, I truly believe that the comfort of Jesus Christ and the sweetness of His love, with the fire of the

Holy Ghost that purges all sin, shall be in thee and with thee, leading thee and teaching thee how thou shalt think, how thou shalt pray, what thou shalt work, so that in a few years thou shalt have more delight to be alone and speak to thy Love and thy Spouse Jesus Christ that is high in heaven, than if thou wert here the lady of a thousand worlds.

Men think that we are in pain and great penance, but we have more joy and more true delight in a day than they have in the world all their lives. They see our bodies but they see not our hearts where our solace is. If they saw that, many of them would forsake all that they have to follow us. Therefore be comforted and stalwart and dread not suffering nor anguish, but make fast all thine intent in Jesus that thy life be good and pleasing ; and see that there is nothing in thee that might be displeasing to Him, that thou dost not soon amend.

The state that thou art in, that is solitude, is most suitable of all to the revelation of the Holy Ghost. For when St John was in the Isle of Patmos, God showed him His secrets. It is the goodness of God that He comforts them wonderfully that have no comfort of the world, if they give their hearts entirely to Him, and covet nor seek nothing but Him : then He gives Himself to them in sweetness and delight, in burning love, in joy and melody, and dwells with them in their souls so that His comfort never departs from them. And if they at any time begin to err, through ignorance or frailty, He soon shows them the right way, and all that they have need of, He teaches them.

No man may come to such revelation and grace on the first day, but only through long travail and eagerness to love Jesus Christ, as thou shalt hear afterwards. Nevertheless, then, He suffers them to be tempted in various ways, both waking and

sleeping. For ever the more temptations, and the more grievous they are, that they stand against and overcome, the more they shall rejoice in His love when those temptations are passed. Waking, they are sometimes tempted with foul thoughts, vile lusts, wicked delights—with pride, ire, envy, despair, presumption, and many others. But their remedy shall be prayer, weeping, fasting and watching. These things, if they are done with discretion, put away sin and filth from the soul and make it clean to receive the love of Jesus Christ, who may not be loved but in purity.

Also sometimes the fiend tempts men and women that are solitary and alone, in a strange and subtle way. He transfigures himself into the likeness of an angel of light and appears to them, saying that he is one of God's angels come to comfort them, and so deceives fools. But them that are wise and will not at once trust all spirits, but ask counsel of wise men, he may not beguile. As I find written of a recluse, that was a good woman, to whom the evil angel often appeared in the form of a good angel, and said that he was come to bring her to heaven. Wherefore she was right glad and joyful. But nevertheless she told it to her confessor, and he, a wise man and wary, gave her this counsel: "When he comes," he said, "bid him show thee Our Lady, Saint Mary. When he has done so, say '*Ave Maria.*'" She did so. The fiend said: "Thou hast no need to see her; my presence is sufficient for thee." And she said that at all costs she must see her. He saw that it behoved him either to do her will or she would despise him. At once he brought forth and showed to her the fairest woman that might be, as to her appearance. And down she went on her knees and said "*Ave Maria!*" And immediately all vanished away, and for shame never since has he come to her.

This I say, not because I expect that he shall have leave to tempt thee in this manner, but because I wish thee to beware, if any such temptations befall thee sleeping or waking, that thou believe them not too quickly, until thou knowest the truth.

More subtly he transfigures himself into the form of an angel of light, that commonly all men are tempted with; and then he hides evil under the likeness of good. And he does that in two ways: one is, when he eggs us on to overmuch ease and rest of the body and softness to our flesh, under the excuse of the need to sustain our nature. For he puts into us such thoughts as: unless we eat well and drink well and sleep well and lie soft and sit warm, we may not serve God, nor persevere in the travail that we have begun. But he thinks to bring us to overmuch lust. Another way is, when under the likeness of ghostly good he entices us to sharp and overmuch penance, in order to destroy ourselves, and says thus: "Thou knowest well that he that suffers most penance for God's love, shall have most reward. Therefore eat little, and poor meat, and drink less; the thinnest drink is good enough for thee. Reck not of sleep, wear the hair[1] and the habergeon.[2] Every thing that is affliction for thy flesh, do it: so that there be none that surpass thee in penance." He that says thus to thee is about to slay thee with overmuch abstinence, as he that said the other, to slay thee with too little. Therefore, if we will be rightly disposed, it behoves us to set ourselves in a good mean, that we may destroy our vices and keep our flesh under, and nevertheless keep it stalwart in the service of Jesus Christ.

Also our enemy will not suffer us to be at rest when we sleep, but then he is busy to beguile us in many ways. Sometimes with

[1] The hair-shirt.

[2] Properly a sleeveless coat of mail; here a rough penitential garment.

ugly images in order to make us afraid and make us loathe our state ; sometimes with fair images, fair sights, and all that seems comfortable, in order to make us glad in vain and make us think that we are better than we are. Sometimes he tells us that we are holy and good, in order to bring us to pride ; sometimes he says that we are wicked and sinful, in order to make us fall into despair. But He that is Ordainer of all things suffers us not to be tempted harder than we can withstand, nor that our sleep be without merit to us, if we address our lives to His Will. And know well that thou dost not sin sleeping if thou art always without excess of meat and drink and without evil thoughts when thou art awake.

But many a one the devil has deceived through dreams when he has made them set their hearts on them. For he has shown them some truth and afterwards beguiled them with one that was false. Therefore the wise man says that many affairs follow dreams, and they fell that hoped in them. Wherefore, that thou be not beguiled with them, I will that thou knowest that there are six kinds of dreams. Two there are that no man, holy or other, may escape. They are : if their stomach be over-empty or over-full, then many vanities in various ways befall them sleeping. The third is of illusions of our enemy. The fourth is of thought before and illusion following. And the fifth through the revelation of the Holy Ghost that is done in many ways. The sixth is of thoughts before that are about Christ or Holy Church, revelation coming after. In so many ways does the image of dreams touch men when they sleep. But so much the less should we give faith to any dream, since we cannot soon know what is true and what is false, which is of our enemy, which is of the Holy Ghost. For where many dreams are, there

are many vanities. And many they may make to err; for they elevate ignorant men and so deceive them.

Chapter III

I know that thy life is given to the service of God. Then it is to thy shame if thou be not as good, or better, within thy soul than thou dost appear in the sight of men. Turn, therefore, thy thoughts perfectly to God as it seems thou hast done thy body. For I will not that thou thinkest that all are holy that wear the habit of holiness and are not occupied with this world, nor that all are evil that meddle with earthly business. But they alone are holy, whatever be their state or degree, who despise all earthly things; that is to say, who love them not, but burn in the love of Jesus Christ and whose whole desires are set upon the joy of heaven; who hate all sin and never cease from good works; who feel a sweetness in their hearts of the love that is without end; and nevertheless they think themselves vilest of all and hold themselves most wretched, the least and the lowest. This is holiness of life; follow it and be holy.

And if thou wilt be in merit with apostles think not what thou dost forsake but what thou dost despise. For they forsake as much, who follow Jesus Christ in voluntary poverty, in meekness, in charity, and in patience, as they may covet that follow Him not. And think with how great and how good will thou dost present thy vows before Him, and whether thou dost offer thy prayers with great desire, and covet with great fervour to see Him, seeking no earthly comfort but the savour of heaven and having thy delight in contemplation thereof, for that is what He regards.

Wonderfully Jesus works in His lovers whom He tears from

the lust of the flesh and of blood through tender love. He makes them desire no earthly thing, raises them to His solace, to forget vanities and fleshly love of the world, to dread no sorrow that may befall. They think it joy to loathe overmuch bodily ease, to suffer for His love ; and they have great comfort in being solitary, that they be not hindered in their devotion. Now mayest thou see that many are worse than they seem, and especially amongst those that wear the habit of holiness. Therefore exert thyself in all that thou mayest do that thou be not worse than thou dost appear. And if thou wilt do as I counsel thee in this short form of living, I hope, through the grace of God, that if men hold thee good thou shalt be much better.

Chapter IV

At the beginning turn thyself entirely to thy Lord Jesus Christ. That turning to Jesus is naught else but turning from all the covetousness, pleasure, occupations and business of worldly things, and of fleshly lust and vain love. So that thy thought, which was ever downward, burrowing in the earth, whilst thou wast in the world, may now be ever upward as fire, seeking the highest place in heaven, right to thy Spouse where He sits in His bliss. To Him thou art turned when His grace illumines thy heart, and turns away all vices and conforms it to virtues, good deeds, and to all manner of debonairness and meekness. And that thou mayest persevere and grow in goodness as thou hast begun, without reluctance or sadness or discontent with thy life, four things shalt thou keep in mind, till thou art in perfect life. For when thou art come to that, thy joy and desire will be ever burning in Christ.

One is : *the measure of thy life here, that is so short that it is scarcely anything.* For we live but in a moment, that is the least thing that may be. And surely our life is less than a moment, if we compare it to the life that lasts for ever.

Another is : *the uncertainty of our ending.* For we never know when we shall die, nor where we shall die, nor whither we shall go when we are dead ; and God wills that this be uncertain to us, for He wishes that we be ever ready to die.

The third is : *that we shall answer before the righteous Judge* for all the time that we have been here, how we have lived, what our occupation has been and why, and what good we might have done when we have been idle. Therefore the Prophet said : " He has called the time against me," that is each moment He has lent us here to spend in good use, and in penance and in God's service. If we waste it in earthly love and in vanities, very grievously must we be condemned and punished ; for that is one of the greatest sorrows that may be, unless we exert ourselves manfully in the love of God, and do good to all that we may, whilst our short time lasts. And each time that we think not on God, we may count it as time lost.

The fourth is : *that we think how great is the joy that they have who persevere in God's love to their ending.* For they shall be bright as fire and brethren and fellows with angels and holy men, loving and thanking, praising and seeing the King of Joy in the beauty and in the brightness of His Majesty. Which sight shall be reward and food and all delights that any creature may think of, more than any may tell, to all his lovers for ever. It is much easier to come to that bliss than to describe it.

Also *think what pain and what sorrow and torment they shall have who love not God above all things* that man sees in this

world, but defile their bodies and souls in the lust and lechery of this life, in pride and covetousness and other sins: they shall burn in the fire of Hell, with the devil whom they served, as long as God is in heaven with His servants: that is, *for evermore.*

Chapter V

I desire that thou be ever climbing Jesus-ward, and expending thy love and thy service in Him; not as fools do that begin in the highest degree and come down to the lowest. I say this not because I wish that if thou hast begun unreasonable abstinence, thou shouldst keep to it; but because many that were fervent at the beginning and capable of the love of Jesus Christ have hindered themselves by overmuch penance and made themselves so feeble that they may not love God as they should. In which love it is my desire and admonition that thou mayest wax ever more and more. I hold thee never in the less merit if thou art not given to so much abstinence. But if thou dost set all thy thought on how thou mayest love thy Spouse Jesus Christ more than thou hast done, then I dare say that thy merit is waxing and not waning.

Chapter VI

Wherefore, that thou be rightly disposed, both for thy soul and thy body, thou shalt understand four things. The first thing is: *What thing defiles a man.* The second is: *What makes him clean.* The third: *What keeps him in cleanness.* The fourth: *What thing draws him to ordain his will wholly according to God's will.*

For the first, know thou that we sin in three things that make us foul—that is, with the *heart*, and *mouth*, and *deed.*

The sins of the heart are these: evil thought, evil delight, assent to sin, desire for evil, wicked will, ill suspicion, undevotion, if thou dost let thy heart be idle for any time, without occupation in the love and praise of God; evil fear, evil love, fleshly affection towards thy friends or others that thou lovest; joy in any men's ill fare, whether they be enemies or not; despising of poor or of sinful men, to honour rich men for their riches, inordinate joy in any worldly vanity, worldly sorrow, impatience, perplexity, that is doubt as to what is to be done and what not, for every man ought to be sure about what he shall do and what he shall leave; obstinacy in evil, reluctance to do good, making it a hardship to serve God, regret that one did no more evil, or that one did not that lust or that will of the flesh that one might have done; instability of thought, regret for penance, hypocrisy, love to please men, fear to displease them, being ashamed of good deeds, joy in evil deeds, conceit; covetousness of honour or of dignity, or of being held better than others, or richer or fairer, or more feared; vainglory in any gifts of nature, or of chance, or of grace; being ashamed of poor friends, proud of rich kindred or of gentle—for we are all alike free before God's face unless our deeds make us any better or worse than others; despite of good counsel and of good teaching.

The sins of the mouth are these: to swear often, forswearing, slander of Christ or of any of His saints, to speak His name without reverence, gainsaying and strife against truthfulness, grumbling against God for any anguish or trouble or tribulation that may befall on earth, to say God's office undevoutly and without reverence, backbiting, flattering, lying, abusing, cursing, defaming, quarrelling, threatening, sowing of

discord, treason, false witness, evil counsel, scorning, unbuxomness (that is, disobedience) with speech ; to turn good deeds to evil in order to make them be held evil that do them, for we ought to recount our neighbours' deeds in the best light and not in the worst ; exciting any man to anger, reprehending in another that which one does oneself, vain speech, much speech, foul speech, to speak idle words or words that are not needed ; boasting, embellishing of words, defending sin, crying out with laughter, making grimaces at any man, to sing secular songs and love them, to praise evil deeds, to sing more for the praise of men than of God.

The sins of deed are these : gluttony, lechery, drunkenness, simony, witchcraft, breaking of the Holy Days, sacrilege, to receive God's Body in deadly sin, breaking of vows, apostasy, waywardness in God's service, to give example of ill deeds, to hurt any man in his body or in his goods or in his fame, theft, rapine, usury, deceit, selling of justice, to hearken to evil, to give to harlots, to withhold necessaries from thy body, or to give it to excess, to begin a thing that is above our might, habit of sin, falling often into sin, feigning more good than we have in order to seem holier, more learned or wiser than we are ; to hold office for which we are not sufficient, or that which may not be held without sin, to lead dances, to bring up new fashions, to rebel against one's sovereign, to insult them that are less, to sin in sight, in hearing, in smelling, in touching, in handling, in swallowing, in gifts, in ways, signs, biddings, writings. To welcome the circumstances that make thee sin more or less, which are time, place, manner, number, person, dwelling, knowledge, age ; to desire to sin before one is tempted ; to constrain oneself to sin.

Many other sins there are of omission—that is, of leaving of good undone ; when men leave the good that they should do ; not thinking on God, nor fearing nor praising Him, nor thanking Him for His benefits ; to do not all that one does for the love of God ; to sorrow not for one's sin as one should do ; not to dispose oneself to receive grace ; and if one has received grace, not to use it as one ought, nor to keep it ; to turn not to the inspiration of God ; to conform not one's will to God's will ; not to give attention to one's prayers, but gabble on and never care so long as they are said ; to do negligently what one is bound to do through a vow, or commanded, or enjoined in penance ; to drag on at length what should be done soon ; not having joy in one's neighbour's profit as in one's own ; not sorrowing for his ill luck ; not standing against temptations ; not forgiving them that have done one harm ; not keeping faith with one's neighbours as one would that they did to oneself ; and not rendering them a good deed for another, if one can ; not reproving them that sin before one's eyes ; not making peace in strifes ; not teaching them that are not learned ; not comforting them that are in sorrow, or in sickness, or in poverty, or in penance, or in prison. These sins and many others make men foul.

The things that cleanse us from that filth are three, against those three ways of sins. The first is *sorrow of heart*, against the sin of thought. To be perfect it behoves thy sorrow to be such that thou art resolved never to sin again ; and that thou mayest have sorrow for all thy sins ; and that all joy and solace, but of God and in God, be put out of thy heart. The second is *shrift of mouth*[1] against the sin of the mouth ; and that shall be speedy without

[1] Oral confession.

delaying; naked without excusing; whole without separating, as to tell one sin to one priest and another to another; tell all that thou knowest to one, or else thy shrift is worth nothing. The third is *satisfaction*, which has three parts: fasting, prayer, and alms-deeds. Not only to give poor men meat and drink, but to forgive them that do thee wrong and pray for them; and inform them what they shall do that are at the point of perishing.

For the third thing, thou shalt know that it behoves thee to preserve *cleanness of heart and of mouth and of work*. Three things keep *cleanness of heart*: one is watchful and stable thought of God; another is care of thy five wits so that all their wicked tendencies be excluded from the flesh; the third, honest and profitable occupation. Also three things keep *cleanness of mouth*. One is that thou dost bethink thee before thou speakest; another is that thou be not of much speech but of little; and especially always until thy heart be established in the love of Jesus Christ, so that thou thinkest that thou lookest always on Him whether thou speakest or not. But such a grace thou mayest not have on the first day, but with long travail and great industry to love Him habitually, so that the eye of thy heart be ever upward; then shalt thou come thereto. The third, that for nothing, not even for humility, shalt thou lie to any man. For every lie is a sin and evil and not God's will. Thou needst not tell all the truth always, unless thou wilt. But hate all lies. If thou sayest a thing of thyself that seems to thy praise, and thou sayest it to the praise of God and help of another, thou dost not unwisely, for thou speakest the truth. But if thou wilt have anything secret, tell it to none but such a one that thou art sure that it should not be disclosed, except to the praise of God, of Whom

is all goodness, that makes some better than others, and gives them special grace not only for themselves but also for them that will do well after their example.

Three things keep *cleanness of work* : one is, an active thought of death. For the wise man says : " Remember thy last end and thou shalt not sin." Another, flee from evil fellowship that gives more example to love the world than God, earth than heaven, filth of body than cleanness of soul. The third is, temperance and discretion in meat and drink ; that it be neither to excess nor beneath reasonable sustenance for thy body. For excess and overmuch fasting both come to an end because neither is God's will. And that many will not believe for anything that man may say. If thou takest sustenance of such gifts as God sends for the time and the day, whatever it may be, I except no kind of meat that Christian men may use, with discretion and measure, thou dost well ; for so did Christ Himself and His Apostles.

If thou dost leave many meats that men have, not despising the meat that God has made for man's help but because thou hast no need thereof, thou dost well ; if thou seest that thou art stalwart to serve God and that it breaks not thy stomach. For if thou hast broken it with overmuch abstinence thou art bereft of appetite for meat, and thou shalt often be in distress, as if thou wert ready to give up the ghost. And know well, thou hast sinned in that deed. And thou mayest not soon know whether thy abstinence be against thee or with thee.

For the time when thou art young, I advise thee to eat and drink, better and worse, as it comes, that thou be not beguiled. And afterwards, when thou hast proved many things and overcome many temptations and knowest better thyself and God

than thou didst, then, if thou seest that it is good to do so, thou mayest take to more abstinence. And meanwhile thou mayest do private penance, which all men need not know.

Righteousness is not all in fasting or in eating. But thou art righteous if despite and praise, poverty and riches, hunger and need be all alike to thee as delights and dainties. If thou takest these praising God, I hold thee blessed and high before Jesus. Men that come to thee, love thee because they see thy great abstinence and because they see thee enclosed. But I cannot love thee so easily for anything that I see thee do outwardly, unless thy will be conformed entirely to God's will. And set naught by their praise and their blame, and give no heed if they speak less good of thee than they did, but that thou be more fervent in God's love than thou wert. For one thing I warn thee : I believe that God has no perfect servant on earth without enemies amongst some men. For only wretchedness has no enemy.

In order to draw us to conform our will to God's will there are three things. One is, the example of holy men and holy women who were intent, night and day, to serve God and fear Him and love Him. And if we follow them on earth we must be with them in heaven. Another is, the goodness of Our Lord that despises none but gladly receives all that come to His mercy ; and He is homelier to them than brother or sister or any friend that they most love or most trust in. The third is, the wonderful joy of the kingdom of heaven, that is more than tongue may tell, or heart may think, or eye may see, or ear may hear.

As in hell nothing may live because of the great pain, were it not that the might of God suffers them not to die, so the joy of the sight of Jesus in His Godhead is so great that they must die

for joy but for His goodness Who wills that His lovers be ever living in His bliss. His justice wills that all that loved Him not be ever living in fire that is horrible for any man to think about. See, then, what it is to feel it ! But they that will not think on it and dread it now, they shall suffer it evermore. Now hast thou heard how thou mayest dispose thy life and rule it according to God's will. But I know well that thou desirest to hear some special point of the love of Jesus Christ, and of contemplative life to which thou hast betaken thyself in the sight of men. As I have grace and knowledge I will advise thee.

Chapter VII

Amore langueo. These two words are written in the book of love, that is called the Song of Love or the Song of Songs. For he that loves much likes to sing often of his love, for the joy that he or she has when they think on that which they love ; especially if their lover be true and loving. And this is the English of those two words : " I languish for love."

Divers men on earth have various gifts and graces of God, but the special gift of those that lead a solitary life is to love Jesus Christ. Thou sayest to me : " All men love Him that keep His commandments." That is true. But all men that keep His biddings do not keep also His counsel ; and all that follow His counsel are not also filled with the sweetness of His love, nor feel the fire of burning love of heart. Therefore the diversity of love makes the diversity of holiness and of merit.

In heaven the angels that are most burning in love are nearest to God. Also men and women that have most of God's love, whether they do penance or not, shall be in the highest degree

in heaven ; they that love Him less, in the lower order. If thou lovest Him much, much joy and sweetness and burning thou feelest in His love, that is to thy comfort and strength night and day. If thy love be not burning in Him, little is thy delight. For no man may feel Him in joy and sweetness unless he be clean and filled with His love. And thereto shalt thou come with great travail in prayer and thinking, having such meditations that are all in the love and praise of God.

And when thou art at thy meat, always praise God in thy thought at every morsel, and say thus in thy heart : " Praised be Thou, King ; and thanked be Thou, King ; and blessed be Thou, King, Jesus all my Joy, for all Thy good gifts, Who for me shed Thy blood and died on the rood. Give Thou me grace to sing the song of Thy praising." And think it not only whilst thou dost eat, but both before and after, always except when thou prayest or speakest. Or if thou hast other thoughts in which thou hast more sweetness and devotion than in those that I teach thee, thou mayest think them. For I hope that God will set such thoughts in thy heart as He pleases, and as thou art ordained for.

When thou prayest, look not how much thou sayest, but how well : that the love of thy heart be ever upward, and thy thought be on what thou sayest, as much as thou art able. If thou art in prayer and meditation all the day, I know well that thou must grow greatly in the love of Jesus Christ and feel much delight within a short time.

Chapter VIII

Three degrees of love I shall tell thee, for I would that thou might win to the highest. The first degree is called *Insuperable*, the second *Inseparable*, the third *Singular*.

Thy love is *Insuperable* when nothing that is contrary to God's love overcomes it, but it is stalwart against all temptations and stable whether thou be in ease or anguish, in health or sickness. So that thou thinkest that thou wouldst not, for all the world and to have it for ever, at any time make God wrath. And thou wouldst rather, if it should be so, suffer all the pain and woe that might come to any creature before thou wouldst do the thing that should displease Him. In this manner shalt thy love be *Insuperable*, that nothing may bring it down, but it may be ever springing on high. Blessed is he or she that is in this degree ; but they are yet more blessed that might keep this degree and win to the other ; that is *Inseparable*.

Thy love is *Inseparable* when all thy heart and thy thought and thy might are so wholly, so entirely and so perfectly fastened, set, and established in Jesus Christ, that thy thought goes never from Him, never departs from Him, except sleeping : and as soon as thou dost waken thy heart is on Him, saying : *Ave Maria*, or *Gloria tibi Domine*, or *Pater Noster*, or *Miserere mei Deus*, if thou hast been tempted in thy sleep ; or thinking on His love and His praise as thou didst waking. When thou mayest at no time forget Him, whatsoever thou dost or sayest, then is thy love *Inseparable*. Very great grace have they that are in this degree of love. And I think that thou who hast naught else to do but to love God mayest come thereto if any may.

The third degree is highest and most wondrous to win. That is called *Singular*, for it has no peer. Singular love is when all comfort and solace are closed out of thy heart but that of Jesus Christ alone. It seeks no other joy. For the sweetness of him who is in this degree is so comforting and lasting in His love, so burning and gladdening, that he or she that is in this degree may feel the

fire of love burning in their souls as well as thou mayest feel thy finger burn if thou dost put it in the fire. But that fire, though it be hot, is so delectable and wonderful that I cannot describe it.

Then thy soul is Jesus-loving, Jesus-thinking, Jesus-desiring, only breathing in the desire for Him, singing to Him, burning for Him, resting in Him. Then the song of praise and love is come. Then thy thought turns to song and melody. Then it behoves thee to sing psalms that before thou didst say. Then must thou take long over a few psalms. Then wilt thou think death sweeter than honey, for then thou art full certain to see Him whom thou lovest. Then mayest thou boldly say: "I languish for love." Then mayest thou say: "I sleep and my heart watches."

In the first degree men may say: "I languish for love" and "I long for love," and in the other degree also. For languishing is when men faint because of sickness, and they that are in these two degrees fall from all the desires of this world and from the lust and pleasure of sinful life, setting their intent and their hearts to the love of God. Therefore they may say: "I languish for love," and much more they that are in the second degree than in the first. But the soul that is in the third degree is as a burning fire, and as the nightingale that loves song and melody and faints for great love; so that the soul is so much comforted in the praise and loving of God, and till death comes is singing spiritually to Jesus, and in Jesus, and of Jesus, not crying bodily with the mouth, of which manner of singing I do not speak, for both good and bad have that song, and this manner of song none has unless he be in the third degree of love. To which degree it is impossible to come but in great plenitude of love.

Therefore if thou wilt know what kind of joy that song has,

I tell thee that no man knows but he or she that feels it, that has it, and that praises God singing therewith. One thing I tell thee: it is of heaven, and God gives it to whom He will, but not without great grace coming before. Who has it thinks all the song and all the minstrelsy of earth but sorrow and woe beside it. In sovereign rest shall they be who may gain it. Wanderers and babblers and those who keep visitors early and late, night and day, or any that are entangled with sin wilfully and wittingly, or that have delight in any earthly thing, they are as far therefrom as heaven is from earth.

In the first degree there are many, in the other degree there are very few, but in the third degree there are scarcely any. For always the greater the perfection is, the fewer followers it has. Men in the first degree may be likened to the stars, in the other to the moon, in the third to the sun. Hence St Paul says: "Other of the sun, other of the moon, other of the stars." So it is of the lovers of God. In this third degree, if thou mayest win thereto, thou shalt know of more joy than I have told thee yet. And among other affections and songs, thou mayest in thy longing sing this in thy heart to the Lord Jesus when thou desirest His coming and thy going:

When wilt Thou come to comfort me and bring me out of care
And give Thyself to me that I may see Thee and have Thee evermore?
Thy Love is ever most sweet to me, sweeter than any love might be.
When shall my heart burst with Thy Love, that it may never more languish?

For on Thy Love all my mind is fixed, and I would fain go hence,
That I might stand still before the dawn of Life eternal and behold Thy loveliness.
My life is consumed with love-longing, which draws me to my death.
The sweet burning band of Love keeps me from place and from pleasure
Until I may gain a sight of Thee, my Sweeting, that will never leave me.
Let my waking be in Thy Splendour beyond the hurt of night,
For my love endures and longs only to behold Thee.

Chapter IX

If thou wilt be well with God and have grace to rule thy life and come to the joy of love, fix this name of Jesus so fast in thy heart that it be never out of thy thought. And when thou speakest to Him and sayest Jesus through habit, it shall be in thine ear joy, in thy mouth honey, and in thy heart melody. For thou shalt think it joy to hear that name spoken, sweetness to speak it, mirth and song to think it. If thou dost think Jesus continually, and hold it firmly, it purges thy sin and kindles thy heart, it cleanses thy soul, it removes anger, it does away with sloth. It wounds in love and fulfils in charity. It chases away the devil and puts out fear. It opens heaven and makes a contemplative man. Have Jesus in mind, for it puts out all vices and phantoms from the lover.

And hail Mary often, both day and night. Great love and joy shalt thou feel if thou wilt take this advice. Thou needst

not covet greatly many books. Keep love in thine heart and work, and thou hast all that we may say or write. For the fullness of the law is charity; on that hangs all.

Chapter X

But now thou mayest ask me and say: "Thou speakest so much of love, tell me: *What is love?* and *Where is love?* and *How shall I love God verily?* and *How may I know that I love Him?* and *In what state may I love Him most?*"

These are hard questions to answer for a feeble and fleshly man such as I am. But nevertheless I shall not therefore be hindered from showing what I know, and as I think it may be. For I hope in the help of Jesus, Who is the Well of Love and Peace and Sweetness.

The first asking is: "*What is love?*" And I answer: Love is a burning longing in God, with a wonderful delight and security. God is light and burning. Light clarifies our reason, burning kindles our desires that we desire naught but Him. Love is a life coupling together the loving and the loved. As meekness makes us sweet to God, purity joins us to God. *Love* makes us one with God. *Love* is the beauty of all virtues. *Love* is the thing through which God loves us and we God, and each one of us the other. *Love* is desire of the heart, ever thinking towards that which it loves; and when it has that which it loves, then it rejoices and nothing may make it sorry. *Love* is a yearning between two, with endurance of thoughts. *Love* is a stirring of the soul to love God for Himself and all other things for God; which Love, when it is ordered in God, does away with all inordinate love in anything that is not good. But deadly sin

is inordinate love of a thing that is not good. Then *Love* puts out all deadly sin. *Love* is a virtue that is the rightest affection of man's soul. Faith may be without Love, but it may not avail without it.

Love is the perfection of letters, virtue of prophecy, fruit of faith, health of sacraments, stability of wisdom and knowledge, riches of poor men, life of dying men. See how good love is ! If we suffer ourselves to be slain, if we give all that we have to sustain beggars, if we know as much as all men may know on earth : to all this, without love, is ordained nothing but sorrow and torment.

If thou wilt ask how good he or she is, ask how much he or she loves, and that no man can tell ; for I hold it folly to judge a man's heart, which none knows but God.

Love is a rightwise turning from all earthly things and is joined to God without separation and kindled with the fire of the Holy Ghost ; far from defilement, far from corruption, subject to no vice of this life, high above all fleshly lusts, ever ready and eager for the contemplation of God. In all things unsurpassable, the sum of all good affections, health of good manners, end of the commandments of God, death of sin, life of virtue, strength whilst fighting lasts, crown of victors, arms to holy thoughts, without which no man can please God, with which no man sins.

For if we love God with all our heart there is nothing in us through which we serve sin. True love cleanses the soul and delivers it from the pain of hell and from the foul service of sin, and from the ugly fellowship of the devils ; and of the fiend's son it makes a son of God and partaker of the heritage of heaven.

We shall exert ourselves to clothe ourselves in love, as the iron or the coal does in the fire, as the air does in the sun, as the

wool does in the dye. The coal so clothes itself in the fire that it is all fire ; the air so clothes itself in the sun that it is all light ; and the wool so substantially takes the dye that it is like it. In this manner shall a true lover of Jesus Christ do : his heart shall so burn in love that it shall be turned into fire of love and be, as it were, all fire ; and he shall so shine in virtues that no part of him may be dark in vices.

The other asking is : "*Where is love?*" And I answer : Love is in the heart and in the will of man ; not in his hand, nor in his mouth, that is to say, not in his work, but in his soul. For many speak good and do good and love not God, as hypocrites who suffer great penance and seem holy in men's sight. But because they seek praise and honour of men, and favour, they have lost their merit, and in the sight of God they are the devil's sons and ravishing wolves.

If a man give almsdeeds and betake him to poverty and do penance, it is a sign that he loves God ; but he does not therefore love Him unless he forsakes the world solely for the love of God, setting all his thought on God and loving all men as himself ; and all the good deeds that he may do, he does with intent to please Jesus Christ and to come to the rest of heaven. Then he loves God : and that love is in his soul, and so his deeds show outwardly.

If thou dost speak good and do good, men suppose that thou lovest God : therefore see well that thy thought be in God, or else thou dost damn thyself and deceive men. Nothing that I do outwardly proves that I love God. For a wicked man might do as much penance in body, as much watching and fasting, as I do. How may I then believe that I love, or hold myself better, because of that which every man may do ? Surely when my

heart, whether it loves my God or not, knows no man but God, for naught that they may see me do.

Wherefore love is in will verily, not in work except as a sign of love. For he that says he loves God, and will not do in deed what is in him to show love, tell him that he lies. Love will not be idle: it is evermore working some good. If it cease working: know thou that it cools and withers away.

The third asking is: "*How shall I verily love God?*" I answer: True love is to love Him with all thy might *stalwartly*, with all thy heart *wisely*, with all thy soul *devoutly and sweetly*. No man may love him stalwartly unless he be stalwart. He is stalwart that is meek, for all ghostly strength comes from meekness. On whom rests the Holy Ghost? On a meek soul. Meekness governs and keeps us in all our temptations, so that they overcome us not. But the devil deceives many that are meek, through tribulations, and reproofs and backbitings. But if thou be wrath because of any anguish of this world, or any word that men may say of thee or aught that men may say to thee, thou art not meek, nor mayest thou so love God stalwartly.

For love is stalwart as death, that slays all living things on earth; and hard as hell, that spares not them that are dead. And he that loves God perfectly, grieves not, whatever shame or anguish he suffers, but he is delighted, and desires that he might be worthy to suffer torment and pain for the love of Christ. And he rejoices that men reprove him and speak ill of him. As a dead man, whatsoever men do or say, he answers not. Just so they that love God perfectly are not disturbed by any word that men may say. For he or she cannot love that may not suffer pain and anguish for their friend's love. For those who love have no pain.

Proud men or women love not stalwartly; for they are so weak that they fall at every stirring of the wind, that is temptation. They seek a higher state than Christ. For they will have their will done, whether it be with right or with wrong; and Christ wills that nothing be done but well, and without harm to other men. But those who are verily meek do not wish to have their will in this world, but that they may have it fully in the other. In nothing may men sooner overcome the devil than in meekness, which he greatly hates. For he may watch and fast and suffer pain more than any other creature, but meekness he may not have.

Also it behoves thee *to love God wisely*. And thou mayest not do that unless thou art wise. Thou art wise when thou art poor, without desire for this world, and dost despise thyself for the love of Jesus Christ, expending all thy wit and all thy might in His service. For some that seem wisest are the greatest fools, because they waste all their wisdom in desires and business about the world. If thou sawest a man have precious stones that he might buy a kingdom with, and if he gave them for an apple as a bairn will do: rightfully might thou say that he was not wise, but a great fool.

So, if we will, we have precious stones, poverty and penance and ghostly travail, with which we may buy the kingdom of heaven. For if thou dost love poverty and despise the riches and delights of this world, and hold thyself vile and poor, and think that thou hast naught of thyself but sin, for this poverty thou shalt have riches without end.

And if thou hast sorrow for thy sins, and because thou art so long in exile out of thy country, and dost forsake the solace of this life, thou shalt have for this sorrow the joy of heaven. And

if thou be in travail and punish thy body reasonably and wisely in watchings, fastings, in prayers and meditations, and suffer heat and cold, hunger and thirst, discomfort and anguish, for the love of Jesus Christ: for this travail thou shalt come to rest that lasts for ever and sit in a settle of joy with the angels.

But some there are that love not wisely, like children that love more an apple than a castle. So do many, who give up the joy of heaven for a little delight of their flesh, that is not worth a plum. Now mayest thou see that whoever will love wisely, it behoves to love lasting things lastingly and passing things passingly so that his heart be set and fixed in nothing but in God.

And if thou wilt love Jesus verily, thou shalt not only love Him stalwartly and wisely, but also *devoutly and sweetly*. Love is sweet when thy body is chaste and thy thought clean. Love is devout when thou dost offer thy prayers and thy thoughts to God with ghostly joy and a heart burning in the fire of the Holy Ghost, so that thou thinkest that thy soul is as it were drunk with the delight and solace of the sweetness of Jesus, and thy heart conceives so much of God's help that thou thinkest that thou canst never be parted from Him. And then thou comest to such rest and peace of soul, and quiet without thoughts of vanities or vices, as if thou wert in silence and sleep, and set in Noah's ship, that nothing may hinder thee from devotion and the burning of sweet love. From the time that thou hast gained this love, all thy life, till death come, is joy and comfort, and thou art verily Christ's lover and in thee He rests, Whose state is maintained in peace.

The fourth asking was: "*How thou might know that thou art in love and charity?*" I answer: That no man knows on earth that he is in charity, unless it be through any privilege or

special grace that God has given to any man or woman, but by that all others may not take example.

Holy men and women believe that they have truth and hope and charity, and in that do as well as they may, and hope certainly that they shall be saved, but they know it not so soon, for if they knew, their merit were the less. And Solomon says that there are righteous men and wise men, and their works are in God's hands. Wherefore a man knows not whether he be worthy of hatred or love, but all is reserved uncertain until the next world.

Nevertheless, if any had grace that he might win to the third degree of love, which is called *Singular*, he would know that he was in love. But his knowing would be in such manner that he might never bear himself the higher, nor be less busy to love God. But so much the more sure he is of love, would he be busy to love Him and fear Him that has made him so, and done that goodness to him. And he that is so high will not hold himself worthier than the most sinful man that goes upon the earth.

Also there are seven tests that a man is in charity. The first is when all coveting of earthly things is quenched. For whereso-ever coveting is, there is no love of Christ. Then if a man have no coveting, it is a sign that he has love. The second is a fervent longing for heaven. For when men have felt anything of that savour, the more they have the more they desire, and he that has felt naught desires naught. Then, when any man is so much given to the love thereof that he can find no joy in this life, he has a token that he is in charity. The third is, if his tongue be changed, when he who was wont to speak of the earth now speaks of God and of the life that lasts for ever. The fourth is, exercise of ghostly profit. As, if any men or women give them-

selves entirely to God's service, and meddle with no earthly business. The fifth is when the thing that is hard in itself seems easy to do ; the which love makes. For as Austin says : "Love it is that brings the thing that is far near to hand, and makes the impossible clearly possible." The sixth is hardiness of thought to suffer all anguish and hurt that comes, and without this all the rest suffices not. For whatever befalls shall not make a righteous man sorry. For he that is righteous hates nothing but sin, he loves nothing but God, he fears nothing but to make God wrath. The seventh is delight in soul when he is in tribulation and gives praise to God in every anguish that he suffers. And this shows well that he loves God, when no sorrow may bring him down. For many love God whilst they are in ease, and in adversity they grumble, and fall into so much misery that scarcely any man may comfort them. And so they slander God, striving and fighting against His judgments. And it is a caitiff praise that any wealth of the world causes ; but that praise is of great price, which no violence of sorrow may put away.

The fifth asking was : "*In what state may men most love God?*" I answer : In whatever state it be that men are in greatest rest of body and soul, and least occupied with any needs or business of this world. For the thought of the love of Jesus Christ and of the joy that lasts for ever, seeks rest without, that it be not hindered by comers and goers and occupation with worldly things. And it seeks within great silence from the noise of covetings and of vanities and of earthly thoughts. And all those especially that love contemplative life seek rest in body and soul. For a great doctor says that they are God's throne who dwell still in one state and are not running about, but are established in the sweetness of God's love.

And I have loved to sit, not for penance, nor for fancy that I wished men to speak of me, nor for any such thing: but only because I loved God more, and the comfort of love lasted longer with me than when going or standing or kneeling. For sitting I am most in rest and my heart is most upward. But peradventure it is not therefore best for another to sit, as I did and will do till my death, unless he were disposed as I am, in his soul.

Chapter XI

The seven gifts of the Holy Ghost that are given to men and women who are ordained to the joy of heaven and lead their lives in this world righteously are these: Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Strength, Knowledge, Piety, the Fear of God.

Let us begin at Counsel, for there is need thereof at the beginning of our works, that we err not afterwards. With these seven gifts the Holy Ghost teaches various men severally.

Counsel is doing away of the world's riches and of all delights in all things that man may be entangled with in thought or deed, and the withdrawing into the contemplation of God.

Understanding is to know what is to do and what is to leave, and to give that which shall be given to them that have need, and not to others that have no need.

Wisdom is the forgetting of earthly things and thinking of heaven, with discretion in all common deeds. In this gift shines contemplation, that is (St Austin says) a spiritual death of the fleshly affections through the joy of uplifted thought.

Strength is endurance to fulfil a good purpose, that it be not left for weal or for woe.

Piety is that a man be mild and gainsay not Holy Writ when

it smites his sins, whether he understand it or not; but with all his might he purges the vileness of sin in himself and in others.

Knowledge is that which makes a man of good hope, not boasting of his righteousness but sorrowing for his sins. And that man gathers earthly good only to the honour of God and to the profit of other men than himself.

The Fear of God is that we turn not again to our sins through any evil egging-on. And Fear is perfect and spiritual in us when we dread to anger God by the least sin that we can know, and flee it as venom.

Chapter XII

Two lives there are that Christian men live. One is called Active Life, for it is more in bodily work. The other, Contemplative Life, for it is more in spiritual sweetness.

Active life is much outward, and in more travail and peril because of the temptations that are in the world. Contemplative life is much inward, and therefore it is more enduring, and securer, more restful, more delectable, lovelier and more meritorious. For, if it be rightly led, it has joy in the love of God and savour in the life that lasts for ever, even in this present time. And that feeling of joy in the love of Jesus surpasses all other merits on earth. For it is so hard to achieve, because of the frailty of our flesh and the many temptations wherewith we are beset, that hinder us night and day. All other things are easy to achieve in comparison. For no man may deserve it, but it is given only of God's goodness to them that verily give themselves to contemplation and to quiet for the love of God.

Two things fall to men and women that take to Active life. One, to ordain their household in fear and in the love of God

and find them their necessaries, and themselves to keep entirely the commandments of God, doing to their neighbours as they will that they do to them. Another is that they do according to their power the seven works of mercy; which are: to feed the hungry, to give drink to the thirsty, to clothe the naked, to harbour him that has no housing, to visit the sick, to comfort them that are in prison, and to bury dead men. All those that can, and have the means, may not be quit with one or two of these, but it behoves them to do them all if they will have the benison on Doomsday that Jesus shall give to all that do them. Or else they may dread the malison that all must have that would not do them, when they had goods to do them with.

Contemplative life has two parts, a lower and a higher. The lower part is meditation of holy writing, that is, God's words, and in other good thoughts and sweet that men have of the grace of God, of the love of Jesus Christ, and also in praising God in psalms and hymns or in prayers. The higher part of Contemplation is beholding and yearning for the things of heaven and joy in the Holy Ghost; men have that of grace, though they be not praying with the mouth but only thinking of God and of the beauty of angels and holy souls. Then I may say that that contemplation is a wonderful joy of God's love, which joy is the praise of God that may not be told. That wonderful praise is in the soul, and for abundance of joy and sweetness it ascends into the mouth so that the heart and the tongue accord as one, and body and soul rejoice, living in God.

First, God inspires a man or woman that is ordained to contemplative life to forsake this world and all the vanity and the covetings and the vile lust thereof. Afterwards he leads them apart and speaks to their heart, and as the prophet says: "He

gives them to suck of the sweetness of the beginning of love," and he sets them in will to give themselves wholly to prayers and meditations and tears. Afterwards, when they have suffered many temptations, and when the foul hurts of thoughts that are idle, and of vanities that will encumber them that cannot destroy them, are passing away, he makes them gather to themselves their hearts and fix them only in Him, and opens to the eye of their souls the gates of heaven.

And then the fire of love verily lies in their hearts and burns therein, and makes them clean of all earthly filth; and henceforward they are contemplative and ravished in love. For contemplation is a sight, and they see into heaven with their ghostly eye. But thou shalt know that no men have perfect sight of heaven whilst they are living bodily here. But as soon as they die they are brought before God and see Him face to face and eye to eye, and dwell with Him without end. For Him they sought and Him they desired and Him they loved with all their might.

Lo, Margaret, I have shortly told thee the form of living and how thou mayest come to perfection and to love Him to Whom thou hast betaken thyself. If it do thee good, and profit thee, thank God and pray for me. The grace of Jesus Christ be with thee and keep thee. Amen.

MEDITATIONS ON THE PASSION

SWEET Lord Jesus Christ, I thank Thee for that sweet prayer and for that holy orison which Thou didst make before the Holy Passion for us on the Mount of Olivet. I beseech Thee, Sweet Lord, to hear my prayer.

Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi. Pater Noster. Ave Maria.

Sweet Lord Jesus Christ, I thank Thee for Thy great solicitude for us when Thou didst become so full of anguish that Thou didst sweat blood and an angel came to comfort Thee. I pray Thee, Lord, and beseech Thee for Thy sweet mercy, that Thou be my help in all mine anguish and my temptations; and send me, Lord, the angel of counsel and of comfort in all my needs, that I may turn, through that sweat, out of all sickness into life and health of body.

Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi. Pater. Ave.

Sweet Jesus, I thank Thee for the pains and agonies, shames and felonies, that men did inflict upon Thee with so much treason. Men bound Thee as a thief, without mercy or pity. Lord, I thank Thee for those sweet and piteous paces Thou didst go, for love of us, towards Thine own pain and Thine own death. I pray Thee, Lord, and beseech Thee that Thou unbind us from the bonds of all our sins, as Thou didst suffer to be bound for love of us.

Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi. Pater. Ave.

I thank Thee, Sweet Lord Jesus Christ, for the pain and shame Thou didst suffer before the bishops and masters of the

law and for Thine enemies' buffets and blows and for the many shames that Thou didst suffer. And amongst other things I thank Thee, Lord, for the look that Thou didst give to Thy disciple that had forsaken Thee, Saint Peter; Thou didst look at him with eyes of mercy when Thou wert in Thy greatest anguish and Thy greatest pain: Thou didst there show openly the love and the charity that Thou hadst towards us, that shame nor pain nor anything may draw Thy Heart from us. Sweet Lord full of mercy and of pity, grant therefore that we, under Thy blessed gaze, may turn to Thy grace and repent us of our trespasses and misdeeds, so that we may come with Saint Peter to Thy mercy.
Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi. Pater. Ave.

I thank Thee, Sweet Lord Jesus, for all the pains and torments, scornings, slanderings and shame that men did and said to Thee on that night in the hard prison wherein they held Thee. Lord, I pray Thee and beseech Thee to give me patience and strength to withstand steadfastly against all the assaults and temptations of my foes and of mine enemies, ghostly and bodily.
Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi. Pater. Ave.

Lord Jesus Christ, I thank Thee for all the pains and shame that Thou didst suffer before Pilate, and for all Thy paces and Thy steps that Thou didst go for me in all that sorrow, now hither, now thither, now before one and now before another. I pray and beseech Thee, Lord, for all these pains and shame and grievances, and the paces that Thou didst go at the same time for love of us, that Thou wouldst draw and direct our ways and our steps towards Thee and to Thy service.
Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi. Pater. Ave.

Sweet Lord Jesus Christ, I thank Thee for the pains that Thou didst suffer for us, and for that sweet Blood that Thou

didst shed for us when Thou wert so sorely beaten and bound to the pillar, that the Blood was seen even on the pillar. I pray Thee and beseech Thee, as my dear Lord, that that sweet Blood which Thou didst shed so largely for me may be full remission for my soul.

Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi. Pater. Ave.

Sweet Lord Jesus Christ, I thank Thee for the pains and shame that Thou, through Thy sweet will, didst suffer for us when Thou wert clad in purple for shame, and crowned with thorns to torment Thy sweet Head; and they kneeling in scorn called Thee Lord, King and Master, and withal spat on Thy face so foully, and Thy face was so foully clotted with the foul spitting of the foul cursed Jews, who buffeted and smote and beat Thy sweet Head. And for Thy bitter wounds I thank Thee, for Thy pains and for Thy sweet blood that ran down and streamed from Thy blessed face. I pray and beseech Thee, dear Lord, that Thou defend us from sin and from the shame that we have deserved for sin.

Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi. Pater. Ave.

Sweet Lord Jesus Christ, I thank Thee that Thou wert then so made to bleed, so crowned before all the folk, and Thy sweet face so bespattered and plastered with the foul and stinging spitting of their cursed mouths. Then wert Thou on each side forced and harried to strong death and condemned to the foul death of hanging. Blessed and thanked be Thou. I beseech Thee, dear Lord, for Thy great mercy, to give me grace and wisdom to judge and condemn myself, to the saving of my soul.

Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi. Pater. Ave.

Sweet Lord Jesus Christ, I thank Thee for the pains and shame Thou didst suffer so sweetly and so gladly, when they

made now to drag Thee, now to hustle Thee so shamefully, now to smite Thee, now to beat Thee so sorely and so cruelly, and made Thee bear Thine own rood on Thy sweet naked back, as it were a thief that bore his own gallows to be hanged upon himself at the Mount of Calvary, where they punished wicked men and thieves, whether they were thieves or manslayers. And there Thou didst suffer them to do Thee to death upon the Cross.

Dear Lord Jesus, have mercy, who art the Well of Mercy! Why will not mine heart burst and cleave in two? How shall it ever last, when it runs in my heart, how Thou wert woe-begone at Thy kirtle-changing? When false Herod let them take from Thee the garment that stuck fast with the blood of that hard scourging to the flesh of Thy body that was sorely beaten and torn, and rent Thy dear skin. The kirtle was plastered and dried to it. Thy flesh was so tender, so sick, and so sore that they dragged it off from Thy body pitilessly and roughly, nor had they any care how sorely Thou didst stand the stripping: for by that some of the pieces of the blisters and of the rent skin were torn off. Then was Thy sick Body, precious Lord, all ruefully torn and bled; the sweat steamed off Thy Body and reeked all around. Think of the dewdrops that then rose therewith!

Ah, Lord, I see Thy red blood run down Thy cheeks, streams after each stroke, before and behind. The skin of Thy head Thy crown hath rent, and every thorn pierceth Thy brain. Alas that I should live and see my gracious Lord, so patient and so meek, Who never trespassed, so shamefully done by! The grieving and the groaning, the sorrow and the sighing, the anguish of His face: I would they were my death! The Crown of all

bliss, that crowns all blessed, and is King of all kings, and Lord of lords, is by hell-hounds crowned with thorns; the Object of heaven's worship is despised and defouled; He that shaped the sun and all that exists, of Whose gift is all good upon earth, He hath not wherein He might hide His head, but is become so poor to make us rich, that He goeth all naked in the sight of all the folk. Ah, Lord, why is not Thy sorrow my death?

Now they lead Thee forth, naked as a worm, the tormentors and armed knights about Thee. The press of the people was amazingly strong. They hustled Thee and harried Thee so shamefully, they spurned Thee with their feet as if Thou hadst been a dog. I see in my soul how ruefully Thou goest, Thy body is so bloody, so torn and blistered, Thy crown is so sharp that sits upon Thy head; Thy hair moveth with the wind, plastered with Thy blood; Thy lovely face is so wan and so swollen with buffeting and with beating, with spitting and spouting, running with blood, that I shudder at the sight. So loathly and so abominable have the Jews made Thee that Thou art more like to myself than to a clean man. The Cross is so heavy, so high and so stark, that they hung on Thy bare back, trussed so hard!

Ah, Lord, how Thou didst groan, so sore and so hard did it press to the bone! Thy body is so sick, so feeble and so weary, what with great fasting and watching all night without any rest before Thou wert taken, and being so dreadfully used with beating and buffeting, that Thou goest all stooping and Thy face is grim. The flesh where the Cross sitteth is all made raw, the bruises and the blisters are wan and blue; the pain of that burden sitteth on Thee so sorely that each foot Thou goest, it stingeth to Thine heart. Thus, in this groaning and great pain, Thou

goest out of Jerusalem to Thy death. The city is so noble! The people are so many! The folk come running out of each street. Then the folk stand up in a great crowd, that men may wonder that think thereon. No thief was ever led to death with such a procession of worldly wondering. There were some of the common people who sighed sorely and greatly for Thy woe, knowing Thee so tormented, and that it was for envy, because the princes and bishops that dispensed the law did Thee to death for Thy wise sayings, when Thou wouldst reprove them for their errors. The people knew it was outrage and wrong that Thou didst suffer, and followed Thee weeping and sighing sorely. Then Thou didst tell them what afterwards happened, Thou didst bid them weep for themselves and for the great vengeance that should fall, because of Thy death, upon them and their children, and upon all the city, that afterwards was destroyed, when for the avenging of their own guilt they were chased out of their place.

Ah, Lord, the sorrow that fell upon Thy heart when Thou didst cast Thine eyes upon Thy Mother! Thou sawest her follow after among the great throng as a woman out of herself; she wrung her hands; weeping and sighing, she cast her arms about; her tears dropped at her feet; more than once she fell in a dead swoon for sorrow, because of the pains that smote her to the heart. The sorrowing and the great dole that she made increased all Thine other pains manifold! So when she knew that it was so, she was much worse, and Thou didst weep also for her. So was your sorrow for one another growing manifold with heaping sorrows! The love of your hearts that over all other loves was without equal, burning keenly, made you to burn for each other with sorrow unlike to any other woe. As

the love was without equal, so the sorrow was without equal. It pierced your hearts as if it were death.

Ah, Lady, mercy! why wert thou so bold as to follow so nigh among so many keen foes? How was it that awareness of womankind or the shame of maidenhood had not withdrawn thee? For it was not seemly to follow such a rout, so vile and so shameful, so horrible to see! But thou hadst no regard for the fear of any man, nor for aught else that should hinder thee, but, as if thou wert out of thyself, all thine heart was set in dole and sorrow for thy Son's passion. Thy love was so keen, the one for the other, and so burning hot, thy sighs were so deep, the sadness of thy face was woeful as death. The love and the sorrow that pierced thy breast bereft thee of all recking of bodily fear, and of worldly shame, and all manner of hindrances, so that thy sorrow had taken thee out of thyself.

Ah, Lady, for that sorrow that thou didst suffer for thy Son's passion—that should have been mine own, for I had deserved it and many worse; I was the cause thereof and He guiltless—as the dear wounds were my own by right, obtain for me, by thy mercy, at least one of them, a prick at my heart of that same pain, a drop of that grief to follow Him with. If all that woe is my right, obtain for me what is my own, and be not so wrongful as to withhold all. Although thy woe be dear to thee, art thou not so generous? Share with the poor, that little hath or none! Give me of thy sighings that sighest so sorely, that I may sigh with thee, that began that woe. I ask not, dear Lady, castles nor towers, nor other worldly wealth, the sun, nor the moon, nor the bright stars, but wounds of grief are all my desire, pain and compassion for my Lord Jesus Christ. Worst and unworthiest of all men, I have an appetite for pain—to beseech

my Lord a drop of His red Blood to make bloody my soul, a drop of that water to wash it with.

Ah, Lady, who art mother of mercy, succour of all sorrow and remedy of all wretchedness, mother of wretches and of all the woeful, for that mercy hearken to this wretch and visit thy child: sow in mine heart, that is as hard as stone, a spark of compassion for that dear passion, a wound of that grief to soften it with.

Ah, Lord, the pain that wicked Jews, so cruel and so keen, punished Thee with on the Mount of Calvary without any mercy! They cast the Cross down flat on the ground and with strong ropes bound Thy hands and Thy feet and laid Thee thereon. They drew and strained Thee straight in breadth and length by Thy hands and feet, and drove in the nails first in the one hand, and drew hard, and then drove in the other. The nails were blunt at the point, so that they should burst the skin and the flesh; they pierced Thy hands and Thy feet all with the blunt nails, for the greater pain. *Foderunt manus meas et pedes meos.*[1] Glorious Lord, so dolefully done by, so ruefully stretched upright on the rood; for Thy great meekness, Thy mercy and Thy might, assuage all my agony with the unction of Thy blood.

Ah, Lord, what a sight I now see! Thy wounds stretch so wide with Thy straining, Thy limbs and Thy joints are so tender! Thou liest torn and red, strained on the Cross, the sharp crown on Thy head, that sitteth on Thee so sorely. Thy face is so swollen that once was so fair. Thy sinews and Thy bones stand out so stark that Thy bones may be numbered. The streams of Thy red Blood are running as in a flood, Thy wounds are bleeding

[1] "They have pierced my hands and my feet."

and grisly to look upon. The moan that Thy Mother makes increases Thy woe.

Ah, Lord, King of Might, that wouldst leave Thy might and become unmighty to right my wrongs ! What is it that I speak and beat the wind ? I speak of the feeling of Thee and I find no taste ; I blunder in my working as a man that is blind ; I study in my thoughts and they work all to waste. It is the token of my death and filth of my sin that hath slain my soul, that is stuck therein and stoppeth all the savour, that I, who have so shamefully been Thy traitor untrue, might not feel Thee. It might be a prison, glorious Lord, for Thy Godhead ! The stink of my shame, the sorrow of my soul, the filth of my mouth ! If I lick thereon it defileth Thy name, so that I may in no way taste Thy sweetness which I have lost through sin, or have pleasure in such comfort ; for I blunder gladly in the lusts of many divers sins.

But Thou, glorious Lord, quickenest the dead and Thou hast converted many and brought them to heavenly reward. Thou gavest light to the blind-born as I read in the book, which betokens ghostly works, it is certain. Quicken me, Lord Jesus Christ, and give me grace that I may feel some of the savour of ghostly sweetness ; lend me Thy light, that I may have some sight in my soul to cool my thirst. But I know well this that I have read, that whoso yearneth and seeketh aright, though he feel Thee not, he hath that which he knows not—the love of Thy Godhead. This saying and other such have promised us that if a man find no savour, thinking himself an outcast, rebuking, reviling and declaring his weakness, and holding himself unworthy to have devotion or any such special gift of Our Lord God, whensoever he may find no devotion—then he shall soonest get the gift of His grace.

Then there went after the Cross many Jews and raised it up and lifted it on high, with all the might that they had, and dropped it hard into the pit of the hill that was made for it : Thy wounds burst and ran out sorely, so that Thy body hung all shaken, and Thou wert woe-begone.

Lord, how woeful Thou wast then!—when the sore wounds of Thy feet and of Thy hands, that were tender above all men's, bore all the weight of Thy blessed body that was so fair and large. That sore and that sorrow Thy Mother beheld, who was so lovely, so meek and so mild ; she fell down often sighing, and the sorrow pierced her breast as if it were death ; she hung her head down dolefully, she wrung her hands, the tears that she wept were full bitter ; the sighing and the sorrow that she made increased Thy woe and made it manifold. The place was so disgusting and abominable, the stink of the carrion smote in Thy nose.

So wert Thou pained in Thy five wits, to heal the trespasses that we have wrought with them. Against our trespass by sight Thou wert blindfolded by the Jews, against the sin of our nose-smellings, the smell of the carrion as Thou didst hang on the rood smote on Thy nose. Against our tasting, Thou didst taste of the gall, so poor wert Thou made by Thy great bleeding. Against lecherous hearing that we have grieved Thee with, Thou didst with Thine ears hear much wrong when men accused Thee falsely of sin, calling at Thy crowning in scorn and hatred and saying : " Hail be Thou King ! " and spat in Thy face ; the hearing of the foul cry when they all cried : " Put Him on the rood, the Cross shall be His doom " ; and also when they said " He could save other men ; let Him save Himself now if He can." By the hearing of these and of other wicked words, Thou

wert pained in that sweet wit for us. Against the sin of feeling and of evil ways, Thy hands and Thy feet were pierced with hard nails, and Thou wert hard pained, glorious Lord, from the head to the feet, with crowning and scourging, with buffeting and beating, with spurning and thrusting, binding with hard cords, and straining on the Cross.

There Thou didst hang, so poor and woe-begone, Who of all this world's goods, which were all Thine own, hadst nothing but a poor cloth wherewith to cover Thy privy limbs. Thou that art King of kings and Lord of lords—hell and heaven and all this world are all Thine own—Thou wert at the time of Thy death so poor for me, that Thou hadst not so much earth as Thou mightest die on, but hanging in the air on the hard rood was Thy deathbed dolefully made : the rood had a foot of earth or little more that it stood upon, and that was to Thy pain ! By Thee it was ruefully said, glorious Lord, that foxes have their dens, and fowls have their nests, but at Thy death Thou hadst not whereon to rest Thy head. Jesus, why is not this dole and sorrow the death of me, when I think about it ? How ruefully Thou didst speak when Thou didst say : " All ye that pass by the way, abide and behold, if any pain that ever man suffered, or any worldly woe, be like the sorrow that I suffer for sinful man's sake ! "

Nay, Lord, there was never none so hard, for it was without equal. Of all pains that ever were, none so hard was ever found. And yet didst Thou say, Lord, so sweetly and so meekly : " *Vinea mea electa est, ego te plantavi* " ; that is : " My dear vineyard, that is my dear chosen, have I not planted thee myself ? Why art thou so bitter ? " " *Popule meus, quid feci tibi ?* " that is : " My sweet people, what have I done to thee ? Have I angered

thee that thou dost Me this woe? Have I not given thee all Myself and all that ever thou hast, and life without end if thou wilt take it, My Body for thy Food and to death on the rood, and called thee Myself to thy reward in heaven? Have I with My good death hurt thee so sorely or with My sweet affection grieved thine heart?"

Ah, Lord, Thou didst beseech Thy Father in heaven for the foul traitors, the tyrants, the tormentors, that He should forgive them Thy death and all that they trespassed; and said that the wretches knew not what they did. And also to the thief that hanged by Thy side, who had practised theft ever since he could, Thou didst say that he should be in bliss with Thee that same day. Thou didst not say, therefore, that for his sin he should have long pain, but as soon as he craved mercy of Thee, and knew Thee for God, and confessed his own trespass, so soon didst Thou grant him grace and mercy, to be in bliss, without any longer delay.

Lord, for Thy mercy, Who art Well of Mercy, say to me who am Thy thief what Thou didst say to him. For I have stolen Thy good deeds, and used amiss the wits and the virtues that Thou hast lent to me. Thou that wert so gracious and courteous and so mild as to grant him that grace in Thy greatest woe, now that Thou art in bliss there is naught that grieves Thee but our misdeeds alone that hinder Thee. Be Thou not dangerous or strange to crave, but many times more gracious: for seldom do men see any man that is not more gracious when he is best pleased than when he is in his greatest woe.

Ah, Lord, Thy Mother was woeful, and Thou for her wert also woeful, when she did forego Thee and Thou didst take Thy leave, bequeathing her to St John instead of Thee to serve her

and to comfort her as her son. In token of which Thou didst say : "Woman, lo here thy son"; and to John : "Lo, here thy mother." Thy wisdom would not leave Thy Mother by herself alone, but that there were one with her instead of Thee assigned for her comfort.

Ah, Lady, how sad thou wast when thou with thine ears didst hear that word ! The sorrow for that leavetaking and for thy Son's woe might have been thy death. The tears of thine eyes ran full fast, thy sighs and thy sorrows sat full nigh to thine heart, thou didst fall down and swoon with all thy limbs loose, thine arms fell by thee, thine head hanged down, thy colour grew all wan, thy face dead pale. The sword of thy Son's woe struck through thine heart. "*Animam tuam pertransibit gladius*"; that is : "The sword shall glide through thine heart."

Ah, Lady, no tongue may tell the sorrow that thou didst suffer there at that same changing, when, instead of thy Son, thy flesh and thy blood, thou didst take another fellow : for Almighty God a mortal man, the disciple for the Master, John for Jesus Christ. That change was as doleful to thee as a forecast of thy death. Lady, why had I not then been by thee and heard what thou didst hear, and seen that same sight, and taken my part of thy great sorrow, if I might in that case have slaked thy woe ? For men do say that there is often more solace in having pain in company.

Lord, Thou didst cry out after that and say that Thou didst thirst—as it was little wonder. Then was given to Thee vinegar and gall, by them for whom Thou wouldst bleed Thine heart's blood. Ah, Lord, Thou didst take it and taste thereof; for Thou wouldst be pained in every wit for us. That thirst was twofold, in body and in soul. Thou didst thirst, with a great

yearning, for the amendment of those that did Thee to death, and also for the souls that were then in hell, that had in their lives kept Thy laws. Blessed is that same man, glorious Lord, sweet Jesus, that may suffer in this life for Thy sake, anything of bodily pain or worldly shame, or wholly forsake any lusts, ghostly or bodily, for the love of Thy Name, or may in any point follow Thee here with the shadow of Thy Cross ; that is, sharp living.

Ah, Lord, the agony, the deadly dole that ought to sink into men's hearts when they think on the word that Thou didst say on the rood, making Thy moan to Thy Father so ruefully : "*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabacthani*" ; that is : "My God, My Dear God, why hast Thou all forsaken me, that Thou sparest me nothing ?"

Glorious Lord, Thy Manhood was all forsaken for us. No man ever suffered so vile and painful a death. Thy Godhead willed it for sinful man's sake, without any sparing, that Thou shouldst be so abandoned. Never was martyrdom nor bodily pain like Thine. Thy Manhood was so tender, both bodily and ghostly, and the pain was nevertheless beyond all pains. Such excellent dignity, of the Father's Son of Heaven, did hang between two thieves on the Cross, and that in the midst of the world !—it was no private shame ! As chief of all thieves Thou didst hang in the midst of them, all naked, Thy skin drawn and every limb dragged from the other, upon Thy head the sharp crown wherewith they had crowned Thee ! Thy wounds were so horrible and so widely drawn, the blood that Thou didst bleed was agonizing to see. The sorrow of Thy Mother pained Thee more than all Thy bodily woe, and surpassed all other, even the loss of the souls of them that pained Thee so.

Lord, Thy great mercy, nor that endless love and lovely sorrow that Thou settest on the good that follow Thy will, can contemplate no harm when Thy sorrow was so great for them that were Thy foes. Lord, I will, in my thought, take the rood-foot in my arms, as Thou layest flat there upon the ground, with the stink of the dead men's bones that lay there so abominable under Thy nose. Nothing shall grieve me then nor change mine heart, so that it shall be a great comfort and pleasant thought to me. I will not cast an eye upward to see that glorious sight, to behold Thy wounds ; for I am many times guilty, glorious Lord, and the cause thereof, and so unworthy to see that sight. I would lay me flat on the ground, and lower if might be, among the dead that lie stinking foully, to keep the virtue and the grace of Thy blood ; I will not rise thence nor fly away, till I am become all red with Thy precious blood, till I be marked therewith as one of Thine own, and my soul be softened in that sweet bath. So may it befall, glorious Lord, that mine hard heart may open therewith, that is now hard as stone, becoming all tender and quickening in Thy feeling.

Lord, Thy sweet passion raised the dead from their graves and they walked about : it opened hell-gates : the earth trembled therewith : the sun [1] lost his light. And my sorry heart, that is of the devil's kind—harder than the stones that clove at Thy death—may not feel a little point of Thy passion, nor do I rise with the dead in the agony thereof, nor cleave as the temple, nor as the earth tremble, nor open the closing that is so strongly barred.

My Lord, is not the malice of my wicked heart more than the virtue of Thy precious death that wrought such wonders and

[1] MS. gives "earth."

many a one more, and the memory thereof stirreth not mine heart? Shed, O Lord, a drop of Thy blood to drop on my soul in memory of Thy passion to heal all my sore, make supple and soft in Thy grace what is so hard; and so deign when it is Thy will. I know well that mine heart, glorious Lord, is not worthy to come to Thee that Thou mightest rest therein. It is not for the dignity of Thine Holy Sepulchre that Thou wert closed in manhood. But to hell, Lord, Thou didst go, to visit and make right, and in that same manner I ask Thy coming. I know well, glorious Lord, that I was never worthy to be Thy Mother's fellow, to stand at Thy passion with her and with John; but, Lord, in that case, though I may not be there for my great unworthiness to see that dear sight, I hold myself deserving because of my great trespass, to hang by Thy side as the thief hanged. So, Lord, if I may not be there as a worthy one, I ask the share in Thy death as the guilty one, that though I be not worthy that my heart be visited, my need and my wickedness ask that Thou shouldst set it right.

Come then at Thy will, heavenly leech, and visit me soon, as Thou knowest my need. Kindle in mine heart a spark of Thy passion, of love and of pity to quicken it with; so that, wholly burning in love above all things, I may forget all the world, and bathe myself in Thy blood. Then shall I bless the time when I feel myself so stirred by Thy grace that all worldly weal and carnal pleasure have no attraction for me against the thought of Thy death.

Then, Lord, Thou didst bequeath into Thy Father's hands at the point of death Thy glorious ghost and said: "*Pater, in manus tuas*," etc.; that is: "Father, into Thy hands I bequeath My soul." And as a true token of our salvation, that all

was fulfilled in the bliss of Thy blood, Thou saidst at the last: "*Consummatum est*"; that is: "All is ended." Then Thine head fell down and the ghost went out. Then the earth trembled, the sun lost his light, so that the weather was all dark, as if it had been night. The dead rose, in witness of the Godhead. Then the temple clove in two, the stones thereof even to the roof. With a sharp spear they struck Thine heart; the blood and the water thereof went out.

Thus, glorious Lord, it stirreth in my mind: I see Thy blood pour out of Thy hands and feet, Thy sides pierced with the spear, Thy wounds dried and all run together, Thy body all bled, Thy chin hung down, and Thy teeth bare: the white of Thine eyes is cast inward, Thy skin that was so lovely is all pale, the crown on Thine head is horrible in my sight, Thy hair is plastered with blood and bloweth all about. I would that the memory of that matter were the death of me.

Lord, I see Thy Mother stand by Thy side; she sobbeth and sigheth and falleth down. John, on the other hand, is so full of sorrow; they wring their hands and make much dole. When they look upward the sight of the rood pierceth their hearts as if it were death. They fall down weeping and grieving full sorely. And I am the cause of all that woe!

Lady, for thy mercy, since I deserved all that befell you, and all that is my due, grant me of thy grace a sight of thy sorrow, a point of thy pain to punish me with, that I may for a moment feel somewhat and share in thy sorrow that I have made.

Ah, Lord, they cast lot on Thy clothes, as the book said long before: and left Thee naked between two thieves—so foul a death never suffered any man! The folk began to flock towards the town from the Mount of Calvary. There on the rood Thou

didst hang. That sight is so wonderful. They went so thick, each man to his own home, every one by his own way. Then didst Thou go in Thy Godhead very quickly to hell, to gladden the souls that awaited Thy coming. The bliss and the gladness, the mirth and the pleasure that they had then, the tongue of no man may tell. Thou didst open hell-gates, Lord, through Thy might, and take out of pain many that were there : Adam and Eve, and all that Thou didst choose, that in their lives had kept Thy laws.

Lord, after that Joseph of Arimathea took leave of Pilate to take Thee down, at about the time of evensong, with the help of Nicodemus, of Thy Mother and of John, who stood there sorrowfully. They took from the rood Thy blessed body, they straightened out Thine arms that were become stark, and stretched them down by Thy sides. They bore Thee to the place that Thou wert to be buried in ; they washed off the cold blood and made Thee clean ; they laid Thee in the monument that was new, that Joseph had ordered for himself ; they anointed Thee with ointment that smelled sweet. The sorrow that Thy Mother had, it is sorrow indeed to hear.

Lady, the tears that thou there didst weep made thy breast and thy cheeks all wet, so sorely thou wept. Then was there a guard set of armed knights, to keep the monument till the third day. Amen. Jesus.

A NOTABLE TREATISE ON THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

A NOTABLE TREATISE ON THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

THE First Commandment is: "*Thy Lord God shalt thou praise, and Him only shalt thou serve.*" In this commandment is forbidden all idolatry, witchcraft and charming, which is no remedy for any sickness of man or woman or beast. For they are the snares of the devil, by which he exerts himself to deceive mankind. Also in this commandment it is forbidden to believe in sorcery, or in divining by stars, or by dreams, or by any such things. Astronomers behold the day and the hour and the moment when a man is born, and under which sign he is born, and the moment [1] in which he begins to be; and by these signs, and others, they say that they tell what shall befall the man afterwards. But their error is reproved by holy doctors. Men shall worship holy crosses, for they are a sign of Christ crucified. To images is due the worship that is proper to them of whom they are the images; they are to be worshipped only with that intention.

The Second Commandment is: "*Thou shalt not take the name of God in vain.*" Here is forbidden oath without cause. He that names God and swears false, despises God. In three ways a man may sin in swearing; that is, if he swear against his conscience, or if he swear by Christ's Wounds or Blood—that is always a great sin, though it be truth that he swears, for it sounds irreverent to Jesus Christ. Also if he go against his oath, not

[1] Horstman suggests that "poynte" in the MS. is meant for "planete."

fulfilling what he has sworn. The name of God is taken in vain in many ways: with heart, with mouth, and with work. With heart, false Christian men take it in vain who receive the Sacrament without grace in soul. With mouth, it is taken in vain by all breaking of oaths, by new preaching that is vanity and undevotion, and by prayer when we honour God with our lips, and our hearts are far from Him. With work, hypocrites take God's name in vain, for they feign good deeds outwardly, and they are without charity and virtue and strength of soul to stand against all evil inclinations.

The Third Commandment is: "*Remember that thou hallow the Holy Day.*" This commandment may be taken in three ways. First, generally, that we cease from all vices, afterwards specially that we cease from all bodily works that hinder devotion to God in praying and thinking. The third is special, as in contemplative men, who part with all worldly things so that they may give themselves wholly to God. The first way it is necessary for us to do, the second we ought to do, the third is perfection. Therefore on the Holy Day men ought, as God bids, to leave all sin, and do no work that hinders them from giving their hearts to God, that they may hallow the day in rest, and devotion, and deeds of charity.

The Fourth Commandment is: "*Honour thy father and thy mother.*" That is, in two things, bodily and spiritually. Bodily, in sustenance, that they be helped and sustained in their old age, when they are themselves incapable. Spiritually, in reverence and obedience, that one speaks no words of disrespect to them, nor of dishonesty, nor of displeasure, foolishly, but serves them meekly and gladly and humbly, that one may win what God promises to such bairns; that is, the land of light. And if

they be dead, one ought to help their souls with almsdeeds and prayers.

The Fifth Commandment is: "*Thou shalt slay no man, neither by assent, nor by work, nor by word nor favour.*" And also here is forbidden the unrighteous hurting of any person. They are spiritually slayers that will not feed the poor in need, and that defame men, and that confound innocents.

The Sixth Commandment is: "*Thou shalt be no lecher.*" That is, thou shalt have no man or woman but whom thou hast taken in the form of Holy Church. Also here is forbidden all manner of wilful pollution procured in any way against natural use or otherwise.

The Seventh Commandment is: "*Thou shalt do no theft.*" In which is forbidden all manner of withdrawing other men's things wrongfully, against the will of those who possess them, unless it be in time of great need, when all things are common. Also here is forbidden trickery of weight or of count, or of measure, or through usury, or violence or fear—as beadles or foresters do and ministers of the king—or through extortion, as lords do.

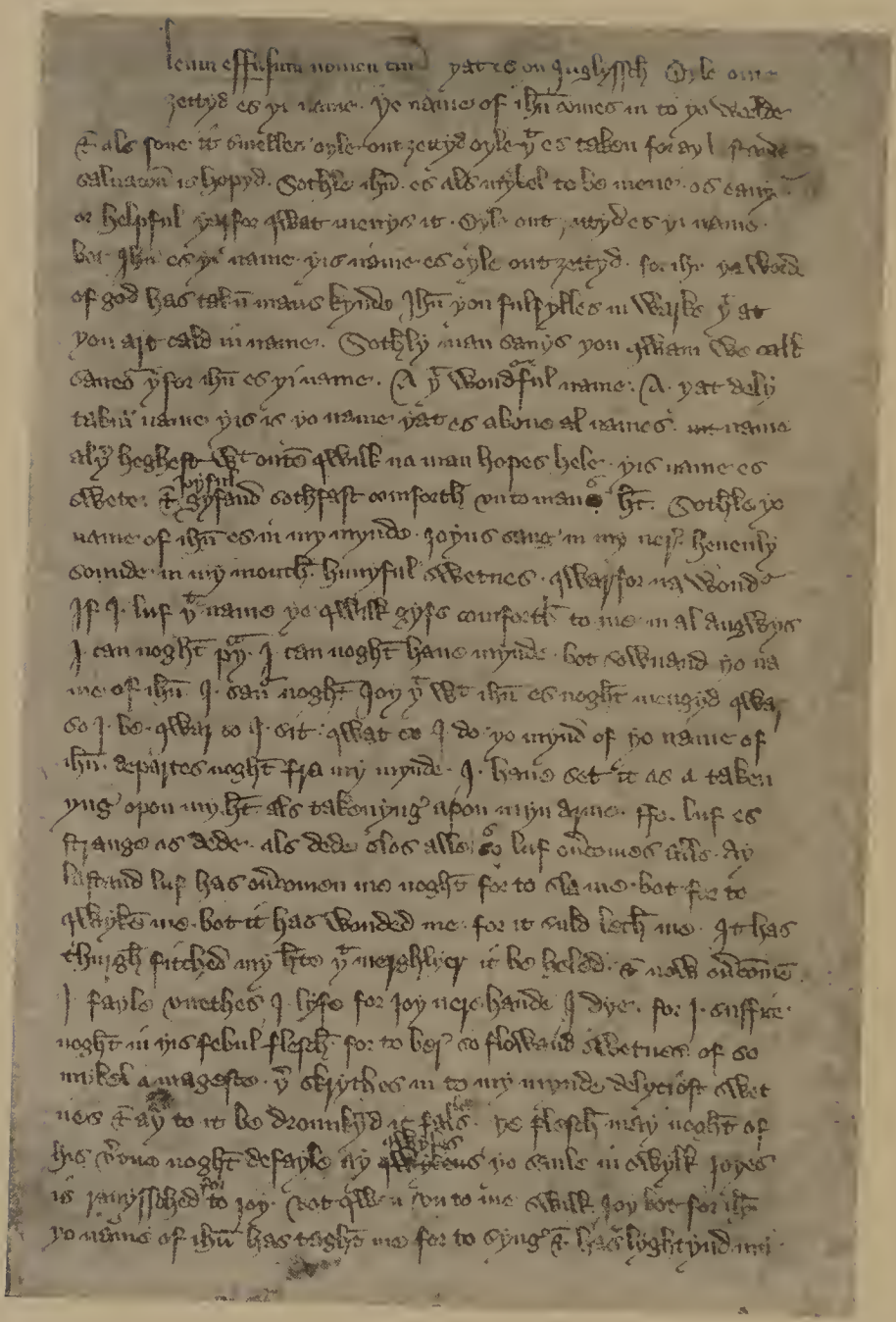
The Eighth Commandment is: "*Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.*" As in assize, or cause of matrimony. And also lying is forbidden in this commandment, and forswearing. But all lying is not mortal sin, unless it hurts some man bodily or spiritually.

The Ninth Commandment is: "*Thou shalt not wrongly covet the house or other things movable or immovable of thy neighbour.*" Nor shalt thou hold other men's goods if thou mayest yield them, else thy penance saves thee not.

The Tenth Commandment is: "*Thou shalt not covet thy*

neighbour's wife, nor his servant, nor his maiden, nor goods of his." He loves God who keeps these commandments for love. He ought to love his neighbour as himself; that is, to the same good end he loves himself for, and nothing for evil; and he should love his neighbour's soul more than his body, or any goods of the world.

OF THE VIRTUES OF THE HOLY NAME OF JESUS



First page of "Oleum Effusum," from Harl. MS. 1022 *f.* 62, British Museum.

This text differs from the Thornton MS. used as the basis of the present transcription.

OF THE VIRTUES OF THE HOLY NAME OF JESUS

"*Oleum effusum nomen tuum*"—that is, in English, "Oil outpoured is Thy Name." As soon as the name of Jesus comes into the world it smells as oil outpoured. Oil, that is a token of everlasting salvation for which we hope. Jesus indeed means Saviour or healthful. Therefore what does "Oil outpoured is Thy Name" mean but "Jesus is Thy Name." This name is oil outpoured because Jesus the Word of God has taken the nature of man.

O Jesus! Thou dost fulfil in work what Thou art called in name. Verily Thou Whom we call Saviour dost save man, and therefore Jesus is Thy Name. Ah! Ah! that wonderful Name! Ah! that delectable Name! This is the Name that is above all names, the Name which is highest of all, without which no man hopes for salvation. This Name is sweet and joyful, giving veritable comfort to the heart of man. Verily the Name of Jesus is in my mind a joyous song and heavenly music in mine ear, and in my mouth a honeyed sweetness. Wherefore no wonder I love that Name which gives comfort to me in all my anguish.

I cannot pray, I cannot meditate, but in sounding the Name of Jesus. I savour no joy that is not mingled with Jesus. Wheresoever I be, wheresoever I sit, whatsoever I do, the thought of the savour of the Name of Jesus never leaves my mind. I have set it in my mind, I have set it as a token upon my heart, as a token upon my arm.

For love is strong as death. As death slays all things, love overcomes all things. Everlasting love has overcome me, not to slay me but to quicken me. But it has wounded me that it might heal me. It has pierced through my heart that it might more thoroughly be healed. And now, overcome, I faint. I can scarcely live for joy. I almost die. For I cannot suffice in this feeble flesh to bear such abundant sweetness of so great a majesty.

There pours into my mind a most delicious sweetness to inebriate it continually. The flesh may not fail in its virtue whilst the soul is always ravished to delight in such joys. But whence comes such joy to me but through Jesus? The Name of Jesus has taught me to sing, and has inflamed my mind with the heat of uncreated light. Therefore I sigh and cry: "Who shall show to the beloved Jesus how I languish for love?"

My flesh has failed and my heart melts with love, yearning for Jesus. All my heart, fixed in yearning for Jesus, is turned into fire of love; and with the sweetness of the Godhead it is entirely filled. Therefore, O good Jesus, have mercy on this wretch! Show Thyself to him who languishes for Thee! Be Thou a Healer to the wounded! If Thou comest I am whole. I do not feel sick but in languishing for Thy love. Let my soul, seeking Thee, take Thee Whom it loves, with Whose love it is taken, Whom alone it covets.

Verily is the mind touched with sovereign sweetness, and made to wax hot in the love of its Creator, whilst it strives to hold continually within it the most sweet Name of Jesus. Verily from thence arises a great love; and whatsoever it truly touches it ravishes utterly to itself. It inflames the affections, it binds the thought, yea, and draws the whole man to its service. Verily, O Jesus, is Thy Name desirable, lovable and full of comfort. No

joy so sweet can be conceived. No solace so delectable can be imagined. No song so sweet may be heard.

Therefore whosoever thou art that dost prepare to love God, if thou wilt neither be deceived nor deceive, if thou wilt be wise and not foolish, if thou wilt stand and not fall, remember always to keep the Name of Jesus in thy mind. And then thine enemy shall fall and thou shalt stand, thine enemy shall be made weak, thou shalt be made strong. And if thou wilt do this loyally, without fear, thou shalt be a glorious and praiseworthy conqueror. Seek therefore the Name of Jesus and keep it, and forget it not. Truly nothing so quenches the fell flames, destroys evil thoughts, casts out venomous affections, and puts away from us curious and vain occupations.

This Name of Jesus, loyally kept in mind, draws up vices by the roots, implants virtues, sows charity, pours in the savour of heavenly things, destroys discord, re-establishes peace, gives everlasting rest, does away with the grievousness of fleshly desires, turns all earthly things to sorrow, and fills the lover with ghostly joy.

So it may well be said : "*Et gloriabuntur omnes qui diligunt nomen tuum, quoniam tu benedices justo*" ; that is : "All shall rejoice that love Thy Name, for Thou shalt bless the righteous." Because the righteous have deserved to be blessed if they have truly loved the Name of Jesus. And therefore they are called righteous because they strove to love Jesus truly. Therefore what can he lack who desires to love the Name of Jesus unceasingly ? Indeed he loves and yearns to love, for we know that the Love of God is of such a kind that the more we love the more we long to love.

Wherefore it is said : "*Qui edunt me adhuc esuriunt, et qui bibunt me adhuc siciunt*" ; that is to say : "They that eat of

me, yet hunger ; and they that drink of me, yet thirst." Therefore the Name of Jesus and the love thereof is in itself delectable and to be coveted. So he shall not lack joy who desires actively to love Him whom the angels yearn to behold. Angels ever see, and they ever yearn to see ; and they are so filled that their filling does not destroy desire, and they so desire that their desire does not destroy their fulfilment.

This is full joy. This is endless joy. This is glorious joy, which those who are filled with it enjoy enduringly without harm. And if we enjoy it we shall be filled with it always without lessening. Therefore, O Jesus, all shall rejoice that love Thy Name. They shall indeed rejoice now, by the inpouring of Thy grace, and in time to come by the sight of joy, and therefore they shall rejoice because joy comes of love, and because they love Thy Name. Hence he that loves not shall evermore be without joy. Hence many worldly wretches, thinking to rejoice with Christ, shall sorrow eternally. And why ? Because they loved not the Name of Jesus.

Whatsoever you do, if you give all that you have to the needy, unless you love the Name of Jesus, you labour in vain. Those alone may rejoice in Jesus who love Him in this life. And they that defile themselves with vices and venomous delights, never fear but that they are put away from joy. So, let all know that the Name of Jesus is saving, fruitful and glorious. Therefore, who shall have salvation that loves it not ? Or who shall bear fruit before Christ that has not the flower ? And he shall not see joy who, rejoicing, loved not the Name of Jesus. The wicked shall be done away with, so that he sees not the joy of God. Verily do the righteous seek joy and love, and they find it in Jesus, Whom they loved.

I went about, covetous of riches, and I found not Jesus. I ran in wantonness of the flesh, and I found not Jesus. I sat in companies of worldly mirth, and I found not Jesus. In all these I sought Jesus, but I found Him not. For He let me know by His grace that He is not found in the land of softly living. Therefore I turned another way, and I ran about in poverty, and I found Jesus, poorly born into the world, laid in a crib and lapped in cloths. I wandered in the suffering of weariness, and I found Jesus weary in the way, tormented with hunger, thirst and cold, filled with reproofs and blame. I sat by myself alone, fleeing the vanities of the world, and I found Jesus in the desert, fasting on the mountain, praying alone. I went the way of pain and penance, and I found Jesus bound, scourged, given gall to drink, nailed to the Cross, hanging on the Cross, and dying on the Cross.

Therefore Jesus is not found in riches but in poverty, not in delights but in penance, not in wanton rejoicing but in bitter weeping, not among many but in solitude.

Verily no evil man finds Jesus, for he seeks Him not where He is. He strives to seek Jesus in the joy of the world, where He shall never be found. Verily therefore the Name of Jesus is saving and must needs be loved by all coveting salvation. He covets his salvation well who keeps constantly within him the Name of Jesus. Indeed I do not wonder that the tempted fall if they put not the Name of Jesus permanently in their minds.

Securely may he or she choose to live alone who has chosen the Name of Jesus for his very own. For where the Name of Jesus is much in mind or named in mouth may no wicked spirit hurt.

EGO DORMIO ET COR MEUM VIGILAT

(I SLEEP. AND MY HEART WATCHES)

EGO DORMIO ET COR MEUM VIGILAT

(I SLEEP AND MY HEART WATCHES)

(Written for a nun of Yedingham.)

THOU that desirest to love, hearken and hear of love. In the Song of Love it is written: "I sleep and my heart watches." He shows great love who is never loth to love, but is always—standing, sitting, going or working—thinking of his love, and often dreaming thereof. Hence, because I love, I woo thee that I might have thee as I would, not for myself, but for my Lord. I will become the messenger to bring thee to His bed, Who has made thee and bought thee, Christ the Son of Heaven. For He will dwell with thee if thou wilt love Him: He asks no more than thy love. And, my dear sister in Christ, thou dost my will if thou lovest Him. Christ desires thy beauty of soul, and that thou give Him wholly thy heart: and I preach naught else but that thou do His will and exert thyself day and night to leave all fleshly love and all pleasure that hinders us from truly loving Jesus Christ. For so long as thy heart is held by the love of any bodily thing, thou mayest not be coupled perfectly with God.

In heaven there are nine orders of angels that are contained in three hierarchies. The lowest hierarchy contains Angels, Archangels and Virtues. The middle hierarchy contains Principalities, Powers and Dominations. The highest hierarchy, that is, next to God, contains Thrones, Cherubim and Seraphim. The lowest order is Angels, the highest, Seraphim. And that order which is least bright is seven times as bright as the sun. As

thou seest the sun brighter than a candle, the moon brighter than a star, so also are the Orders in heaven each one brighter than the other, from Angels to Seraphim. This I say to kindle thy heart to desire the fellowship of angels. For all that are good and holy, when they pass out of this world, shall be taken into these Orders : some into the lowest, that have loved God much ; some into the middle, that have loved more ; others into the highest, that have loved God most and burned most in His love. Seraphim, that is to say, " burning," is the Order into which they are received who desire least in this world, who feel most sweetness in God and have hearts most burning in His love.

To thee I write specially, because I hope for more goodness in thee than in any other, and that thou wilt give thy thought to fulfil in deed what thou seest is most profitable for thy soul, giving thyself to that life in which thou mayest most wholly offer thy heart to Jesus Christ, and being least occupied with this world. For if thou dost make stable thy love and be burning whilst thou livest here, without doubt thy settle is ordained very high in heaven and joyful before God's face among His holy angels. For in the selfsame degree from which proud devils fell down, meek men and women, Christ's doves, are set, to have rest and joy without end for a little short penance and travail that they have suffered for God's love.

Thou dost think it hard now, peradventure, to take thy heart from all earthly things, from all idle speech and vain, and from all fleshly love, to be alone to watch and pray and think of the joy of heaven and of the Passion of Jesus Christ, and to imagine the pain of hell that is ordained for sinful man. But, more wisely, when thou art used to it, thou wilt think it lighter and sweeter than thou didst any earthly thing or solace. As soon as thy heart

is touched with the sweetness of heaven thou wilt little desire the mirth of this world; and when thou dost feel joy in Christ's love thou wilt loathe the joy and comfort of this world and earthly games. For all melody and all riches and delights that men in this world can ordain or think of seem but suffering and anguish to the heart of a man that is verily burning in the love of God. For he has mirth and joy and melody in the song of angels, as thou mayest well know.

If, for the love of God, thou dost leave all things that thy fleshly love desires, and hast no thought of thy relatives, but dost forsake all for God's love and give thy heart only to desire God's love and to please Him, more joy shalt thou have and find in Him than I can think of—how then can I write it? I never know if any man be in such love. For always the higher the life is, the fewer followers it has here; for many things draw men from God's love, as thou mayest hear and see, and God comforts His lovers more than they think who love Him not. Therefore though we seem to be in penance without, we shall have much joy within, if we order ourselves wisely in God's service, and set all our thoughts in Him, forsaking all the vanity of this world.

Give thine attention to understand this writing: and if thou hast set all thy desire to love God, hear these three degrees of love, so that thou mayest rise from one to another until thou art in the highest. For I will hide nothing from thee that I hope may turn thee to holiness.

The first degree of love is when a man keeps the ten commandments, keeps himself from the seven deadly sins, and is stable in the truth of Holy Church; and when a man will not offend God for any earthly thing, but truly stands in His service and perseveres therein to the end of his life. It behoves each

man that will be safe to have this degree of love. For no man can come to heaven unless he loves God and his neighbour without pride, ire, envy or backbiting, and without any other venomous sin, gluttony, lechery or covetousness. For these vices slay the soul and separate it from God, Who is the Life of the soul. And when a wretched man or woman is parted from God we say they are dead, for away from God, without Whom no creature may live, they are slain. For as a man poisoned with a sweet morsel receives a venom that slays his body, so does a sinful wretch, in the pleasure and lust of his flesh, destroy his soul and bring it to everlasting death. Men think it sweet to sin, but the reward that is ordained for them is more bitter than gall, more sour than poison, worse than all the woe that we may see, or hear, or feel.

All perishes and passes that we see with our eyes. The wealth of this world wanes into wretchedness. Robes and riches rot in the ditch. Pride and painting sloughs into sorrow. Delights and dainties shall very soon stink. Their gold and their treasure draw them to death. All the wicked of this world drive to a dale, that they may see their sorrowing where woe is well founded. But he may sing of solace that loved Jesus Christ, when all the wretches fall from wealth into hell.

But when thou hast lived well in the ten commandments of God and firmly put from thee all deadly sins, and dost please God in that degree, bethink thee that thou wish to please God more and do better with thy soul and become perfect.

Then thou dost enter into the next degree of love ; that is, to forsake all the world, thy father and thy mother and all thy kin, and follow Christ in poverty. In this degree thou shalt study how clean thou mayest be in heart and how chaste in body, and give thyself to meekness, suffering and obedience ; and see how

fair thou mayest make thy soul in virtues, and hate all vices. So that thy life be spiritual and not carnal. Nevermore speak evil of thy neighbour, nor give any evil word for another, but suffer all that men say, evil or good, meekly in thy heart, without stirring of wrath. And then thou shalt be at rest within and without, and so shalt thou come easily to the ghostly life which thou shalt find sweeter than any earthly thing.

Perfect life and ghostly is to despise the world and covet the joy of heaven, and destroy, through God's grace, all the wicked desires of the flesh ; and to forget the solace and the pleasure of thy kindred, loving them only in God : whether they die or live, or be rich or poor, hale or sick, in woe or in weal, thank God always and bless Him in all His works. For His judgments are so secret that no creature may comprehend them. And oftentimes some have their pleasure and their will in this world, and hell in the other ; and some men are in pain and persecution and anguish in this life, and have heaven for their reward. Therefore, if thy friends be always at their ease, and hale, and in the wealth of this world, thou and they both may have the more fear lest they lose the joy of heaven for ever. If they be in penance and sickness, or if they live righteously, they may hope to come to bliss.

Therefore in this degree of love thou shalt be filled with the grace of the Holy Ghost, that thou shalt have no sorrow or grieving but for ghostly things, as for thy sins and other men's, and for the love of Jesus Christ, and in thinking of His Passion. And I wish that thou shouldst have it much in mind, for it will kindle thy heart to set at naught all the good things of this world and the joy thereof, and to desire burningly the light of heaven, with angels and saints.

And when thy heart is wholly ordered to the service of God,

and all worldly thoughts are put away, then wilt thou wish to steal away alone, to think of Christ and to be in great prayer. For through good thoughts and holy prayers thy heart shall be made burning in the love of Jesus Christ, and thou shalt feel sweetness and ghostly joy both in praying and in thinking. And when thou art by thyself alone be much given to saying the psalms of the Psalter, the *Pater Noster*, and *Ave Maria*; and take no care that thou sayest many, but that thou sayest them well, with all possible devotion, lifting up thy thought to heaven. It is better to say seven psalms with desire for Christ's love, having thy heart on thy praying, than seven hundred thousand, suffering thy thought to pass in the vanities of bodily things. What good dost thou hope may come thereof if thou dost let thy tongue babble on the book and thy heart run about in the various places in the world?

Therefore set thy thought in Christ and He shall direct it to Himself and keep thee from the venom of worldly business. And I pray thee that as thou dost desire to be God's lover, thou dost love His name Jesus, and ponder it in thine heart, so that thou dost forget it never, wheresoever thou art. And truly I tell thee that thou shalt find much joy and comfort therein. And for the love wherewith thou lovest Jesus so tenderly and so specially thou shalt be filled full of grace on earth, and be Christ's maiden and spouse in heaven.

For nothing pleases God so much as true love of His name Jesus. If thou dost love it right and lastingly, and never cease for anything that men may do or say, thou shalt be received into a higher life than thou canst covet. His goodness is so great that where we inwardly ask Him one, He will give five—so well pleased is He when we will set all our heart to love Him.

In this degree of love thou shalt overcome thine enemies, the world, the devil and the flesh. But nevertheless thou shalt always have fighting whilst thou livest: and till thou dost die it behoves thee to take care to stand so that thou fall not into delights, neither in evil thoughts, nor in evil words, nor in evil work. Therefore thy yearning ought to be great that thou love Christ verily. Thy flesh thou shalt overcome by keeping thy maidenhood for the love of God alone; or, if thou art not a maiden, through chaste and reasonable living in thought and deed, and through discreet abstinence. The world thou shalt overcome through desire for Christ's love and by thinking on His name JESUS, and by desire for heaven. For as soon as thou dost feel savour in Jesus thou wilt think all the world naught but vanity and harm for men's souls. Thou wilt not then covet to be rich, to have many mantles and fair, many kirtles and dainties, but thou wilt set all at naught and despise it as if it were not, taking no more than thou dost need. Thou wilt think two mantles or one enough: thou that hast five or six, give some to Christ, Who goes naked in a poor garment; do not keep everything; thou knowest not if thou wilt live till they be half gone.

The devil is overcome when thou dost stand stable against all his temptations, in true charity and meekness. And think of me that I be not forgotten in thy prayers, who am concerned that thou shouldst be dear to Christ, Whose mercy I need. I desire that thou be never idle, but ever either speaking of God or doing some notable work, or thinking of Him principally, that thy thought be always having Him in mind. And think often of His Passion.

My King that wept such tears and sweat His Blood, and after was so sore beaten and so fiercely scourged that He was wet with

Blood! They bound Him fast to the pillar and fouled His fair face with spitting! The King is crowned with thorns that prick full sore! Alas, my Joy and my Sweeting is condemned to hang. Nailed were His hands and nailed were His feet, pierced was His side so seemly and so sweet. Naked was His sweet breast, His wounds were deep and wide. From five places in His flesh, the blood began to glide as streams on the strand, for all to see. So let everyone think upon this very great pity, how He was condemned to death and nailed upon the tree. He that is the head of all is driven to this dole. He that is our ghostly bread and in heaven the Food of Angels, is followed as a fool. And wonder it is to see, whoso understood, how the God of Majesty was done upon the rood, with thieves as if He were a thief. Whoso hath mind of this, for Christ let him cease from sin. But truly it is said, that love leads the ring, but it was nothing but love that hath laid Him so low. Jesus receive my heart and bring me to Thy love. All my desire Thou art, I covet Thy coming. Make Thou me clean of sin, and let us never part. Kindle my fire within, that I Thy love may win, and see Thy face, Jesus, in bliss that shall never cease. Jesus mend Thou my soul, that I may dwell with Thee, in joy without end. Guide Thou my thought in love and lift mine heart to Thee. Let the soul that Thou hast bought come before Thee. But I covet Thee. I flee this world for Thee. Thou art He whom I have sought. When might I see Thy face? Make Thou my soul clear! Thy love changeth my face. How long shall I be here? When may I draw nigh to Thee, to hear Thy melody, to hear often that song that lasts so long? Wilt Thou be my loving, that I Thy love may sing?

If thou wilt think on this every day thou shalt find sweetness that shall uplift thy heart, that shall make thee fall to weeping

and great longing for Jesus, and so be raised above all earthly things, above the firmament and the stars, so that the eye of thy heart may look into heaven.

And then thou dost enter into the third degree of love, in which thou shalt have great delight and comfort, if thou mayest have the grace to come thereto. For I do not say that thou or another that reads this shall do it all : for it is God's will to choose whom He will to do what is told here, or else another thing in another manner, as He gives men grace for their salvation. For various men take various graces of our Lord Jesus Christ : and all shall be set in the joy of heaven, that ends in charity. Whoever is in this degree has wisdom and discretion to love according to God's will. This degree of love is called contemplative love, that loves to be alone, without ringing or din, singing or crying. At the beginning, when thou comest thereto, thy ghostly eye is taken up into the bliss of heaven and there illumined with grace and kindled with the fire of Christ's love. So that thou shalt verily feel the burning of love in thy heart, ever more and more lifting up thy thought to God and feeling love, joy and sweetness so much that no sickness, anguish, shame nor penance may grieve thee, but all thy life shall turn to joy, and then, because of the uplifting of thy heart, thy prayers shall turn to joyful song, and thy thoughts to melody. Then is Jesus all thy desire, all thy delight, all thy joy, all thy solace, all thy comfort ; I know that of Him will be all thy song for ever, and in Him all thy rest. Then mayest thou say : " I sleep and my heart watches : who shall to my lemman say, that for His love I long alway ? "

All those who love the vanities and special things of this world, and set their hearts on any other things than those of God, may not come to this degree nor to the other degree of love before

named. And therefore it behoves thee to forsake all worldly solace, that thy heart be bound to the love of no creature, nor to any business on earth ; that thou mayest be in silence, ever stable and stalwart, with thy heart in the love and fear of God.

Our Lord does not give men beauty, riches, and delights for them to set their hearts upon and expend in sin, but that they should know Him and love Him and thank Him for all His gifts. The more their shame if they make Him wrath, Who has given them gifts in body and soul. Therefore if we desire to flee the pain of purgatory, it behoves us to restrain ourselves perfectly from the lust and the pleasure and all the evil delights and wicked fear of this world. And there should be no worldly sorrow in us : but we should hold our hope fast in Jesus and stand manfully against all temptations.

Now I write a Song of Love that thou shalt delight in when thou art loving Jesus Christ :

My song is a sighing, my life is spent in longing for the sight of my King, so fair in His brightness.

So fair in Thy Beauty ! Lead me to Thy light, and feed me on Thy love ! Make me to grow swiftly in love and be Thou Thyself my prize.

When wilt Thou come, Jesus my Joy, to save me from care and give Thyself to me, that I may see Thee evermore ?

Could I but come to Thee, all my desires were fulfilled ! I seek nothing but Thee alone, Who art all my Desire.

Jesus, my Saviour ! Jesus, my Comforter ! Flower of all beauty ! My Help and my Succour ! When may I see Thee in Thy majesty ?

When wilt Thou call me? I languish for Thy Presence, to see Thee above all things! Let not Thy love for me fail! In my heart I see the canopy that shall cover us both.

Now I grow pale and wan for love of my Beloved, Jesus both God and Man! Thy love did teach me when I ran to Thee, wherefore now I know how to love Thee.

I sit and sing of the love-longing that is bred within my breast. Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! why am I not led to Thee?

Full well I know Thou seest my state! My thought is fixed upon Love. When I shall see Thee and dwell with Thee, then shall I be filled and fed.

Jesus, Thy Love is constant and Thou knowest best how to love me! When shall my heart break forth to come to Thee, my rest?

Jesus, Jesus, Jesus! I mourn for Thee! When may I turn hence to Thee, my Life and my Living?

Jesus, my Dear and my Darling! My delight is to sing of Thee! Jesus, my Mirth and my Melody! When wilt Thou come, my King?

Jesus, my Salvation and my Sweetness, my Hope and my Comfort! Jesus I desire to die whenever it shall please Thee. The longing that my Love has sent to me overwhelms me.

All woe is gone from me, since my breast has been inflamed with the Love of Christ so sweet, Whom I will never leave, but do promise to love always.

For Love can cure my evil and bring me to His bliss, and give me Him for whom I sigh, Jesus, my Love, my Sweeting.

A longing has come upon me that binds me night and day until I shall see His Face so Fair and Bright.

Jesus, my Hope, my Salvation, my only Joy! Let not Thy Love cool, let me feel Thy Love and dwell with Thee in safety.

Jesus, with Thee alone I am great! I would rather die than possess all this world and have power over it.

When wilt Thou pity me, Jesus, that I may be with Thee, to love Thee and look upon Thee?

Do Thou ordain for me my settle and sit me therein, for then we can never part.

And I shall sing of Thy Love, in the light of the Brightness of Heaven for ever and ever. Amen.

SHORT PIECES

SHORT PIECES

The Bee

The bee has three characteristics. One is that she is never idle, and she is against them that will not work, and casts them out and puts them away. Another is that when she flies she takes earth in her feet, that she be not lightly carried up in a puff of wind. The third is that she keeps her wings clean and bright.

Thus righteous men that love God are never in idleness. For either they are in travail, praying or thinking or reading or doing other good work, or reproving idle men and showing them deserving to be put from the rest of heaven because they will not work here.

They take earth ; that is, they hold themselves vile and earthly, that they be not blown about with the wind of vanity and of pride. They keep their wings clean ; that is, they fulfil the two commandments of charity conscientiously, and they keep other virtues unblended with the filth of sin and unclean lust.

Aristotle says that the bees fight against him that wishes to draw their honey from them. So should we do against devils that exert themselves to rob us of the honey of pure life and of grace. For many there are that never can keep the order of love towards their friends, kindred or unrelated, but either they love them overmuch, setting their thoughts unwisely on them, or they love them too little, if they do not all that they would to them. Such

cannot fight for their honey. Therefore the devil turns it to wormwood and thereafter makes their souls very bitter with anguish and misery, and the business of vain thoughts, and other wretchedness. For they are so heavy in earthly friendship that they may not fly to the love of Jesus Christ, for which they might well forego the love of all creatures living on earth.

Wherefore accordingly Aristotle says that some fowls are good flyers that pass from one land to another, some are ill flyers because of heaviness of body, and hence their nest is not far from the earth. Thus it is of those that turn themselves to the service of God. Some are good flyers, for they fly from earth to heaven and rest there in thought and are fed with delight of God's love and have no thought of the love of the world. Some there are that cannot fly from this land, but let their hearts rest on the way and delight in various loves of men and women as they come and go, now one and now another. And in Jesus Christ they can find no sweetness, or if they at any time feel aught of it, it is so little and so short, because of other thoughts that are in them, that it brings them to no stability. For they are like to a fowl that is called a stork that has wings, but it may not fly for burden of body. So they have understanding, and fast and watch and seem holy in men's sight, but they may not fly to the love and contemplation of God, they are so charged with other affections and vanities.

Of Delight in God

Jesus, Mariæ filius, sit mihi clemens et propitius. Amen.

Yearning and delight in Jesus Christ, that has nothing of worldly thoughts, is wonderful, pure, holy, and enduring; and when a man feels himself in that degree, then is a man circumcised

spiritually, when all other business and affections and thoughts are drawn away out of his soul, that he may have rest in God's love without entanglement with other things. The delight is wonderful when it is so high that no thought may reach up to it to bring it down. It is pure when it is not blended with anything that is contrary to it. And it is enduring when it is clean and stable, delighting by itself.

Three things make delight in God high : one is the restraining of fleshly lust in intercourse ; another is the restraining or repressing of evil tendencies and of temptation in desire ; the third is keeping or raising up the heart in the enlightenment of the Holy Ghost, so that a man holds his heart up from all earthly thoughts, that he may set no obstacle against the coming of Christ to him.

Every one that covets endless health [1] let him be busy night and day to fulfil this instruction, or else he may not win to Christ's love. For it is high, and it lifts all that it dwells in above filthy lusts and vile desires, and above all affections and thoughts of any bodily thing.

Two things make our delight pure. One is turning from sensuality to reason. For when anyone is turned to delight in his five wits, so soon does uncleanness enter into his soul. Another is that the reason be used meekly in ghostly things, as in meditations and orisons and looking into holy books.

Hence the delight that has no disordered tendency and meekly moves towards Christ, in which sensuality is turned to reason, all set and used for God, puts a man's soul in rest and security, so that it is pleased with all God sends, without grumbling or heaviness of thoughts.

[1] *i.e.* eternal salvation.

Ghostly Gladness

Ghostly gladness in Jesus and joy in heart, with sweetness in soul of the savour of heaven in hope, is the highest health. And my life abides in love, and lightsomeness frees my thought. I fear nothing that may work me woe, so much do I know of weal. It were no wonder if death were dear when I might see Him that I seek. But now it is withheld from me and it behoves me to live here till He will release me. Seek and learn from this counsel and thou shalt not err. Love makes me speak and joy makes me talk. See that thou dost lead thy life in lightsomeness, and keep heaviness away. Let not sadness sit with thee ; but in the gladness of God make thou evermore thy glee.

THE AMENDING OF LIFE, OR THE RULE OF LIVING

THE AMENDING OF LIFE, OR THE RULE OF LIVING

THIS book is of the Amending of Life, or the Rule of Living, divided into twelve chapters : the first, Of Conversion or Holy Turning ; the second, Of the Despising of this World ; the third, Of Poverty ; the fourth, Of the Setting of Man's Life ; the fifth, Of Tribulation ; the sixth, Of Patience ; the seventh, Of Prayer ; the eighth, Of Meditation ; the ninth, Of Reading ; the tenth, Of Cleanness of Mind ; the eleventh, Of the Love of God ; the twelfth, Of the Contemplation of God.

Of this, as God will grant, we shall pursue.

CHAPTER I.—OF CONVERSION

Tarry thou not to be turned to Our Lord, nor put it off from day to day. For often the cruelty of death ravishes wretches, and the bitterness of punishment suddenly devours them that are now reluctant to be converted. It may not be numbered by us how many of the worldly wicked presumption has beguiled. Truly it is a great sin to trust in God's mercy and not to cease from sin, supposing God's mercy to be so great that He will not give righteous punishment to sinners. "Work, therefore, while it is day : the night truly comes wherein no man may work."

He calls this life light, or day, in which we ought never to cease good work, knowing that death is certain to us and the hour of death truly uncertain. He calls death night, in which the limbs are bound and the wits are put by, and we may not do anything

towards our salvation, but according to our works we shall receive joy or torment. We live for a moment, yea, less than a moment, for if we would compare all our life with life everlasting, it is nothing.

See, therefore, how we waste our lives in love of vanity, not without grievous damnation, and how we stand idle all day and negligent, without repenting! Therefore, Lord, turn us and we shall be converted; heal us and we shall be healed. Many, truly, are not healed, but rot, and their wounds fester; for to-day they are turned to God, but to-morrow they are turning from Him; to-day doing penance, to-morrow returning to their former evils. Of such it is said: "We have cured Babylon and it is not healed, for it is not truly turned to Christ."

What is turning to God but turning from the world, and from sin, from the devil and from the flesh? What is turning from God but turning from good unchangeable to good changeable, to delight in the beauty of the creature, to the works of the devil, to the lust of the flesh and the world? Not by the going of the feet are we turned to God, but by change of our desires and manners. Turning to God is also achieved when we direct to Him the sharpness of our minds, when we think incessantly upon His counsel and His commandments, that they may be fulfilled by us, and that wherever we be, whether we sit or stand, the fear of God may not pass from our hearts.

I speak not of the fear that is of pain, but of the fear which is in charity, with which we give reverence to the presence of so great a majesty, and by which we fear always lest we offend Him in any little thing.

Thus truly disposed, we are verily turned from the world to God. To be turned from the world is nothing else but to put

away all lusts and bitterness of this world, to suffer gladly for God, to forget all idle occupations and worldly errands, insomuch that our soul is wholly turned to God and is inwardly dead to all things that are loved or sought in the world.

Those given to heavenly desires, therefore, have God evermore before their eyes to behold Him always unwearily, as the Prophet bears witness when he says: "*Providebam dominum in conspectu meo semper*"; that is to say: "In my sight evermore I saw Our Lord before me"; not only for the space of an hour as do they that set before the eyes of their hearts all fair or lovely things of earth, in which they rejoice and by the love of which they desire to rest.

And therefore the prophet says: "*Oculi mei semper ad dominum, quoniam ipse evellet de laqueo pedes meos*"; that is: "Mine eyes are evermore towards Our Lord, for He shall deliver my feet from the snare." By this it is shown that unless our inward eye be unwearily raised to Christ, we may not escape the snares of temptation.

And lest the eyes of our heart be fixed in God and be perfectly turned to God there are many hindrances, some of which are as follows: abundance of riches, the blandishments of women, fairness or beauty of youth. This is the threefold rope that with difficulty may be broken, and yet it must be broken and despised that Christ may be praised.

He that really desires to love Christ truly, not only without sadness but with a joy unmeasured, casts away from him all things that may hinder him. And for this cause he spares neither father nor mother nor himself, he takes no man's cheer, he does violence to all those that hinder him, and all obstacles he bursts asunder.

Whatever he may do in order to love God, he thinks it little. He flees from vices as a brainless man, and he looks not for worldly solace ; but addressing himself wholly to God he puts away his sensuality. He is wholly gathered inward and wholly lifted up in Christ, so that when he seems to men to be sad he rejoices wonderfully.

But there are many who say that they will turn to God, and yet they say that they may not, for by some occupations or other they are held back ; whose cold mind we sorrowfully reprove. For without doubt, if they were touched with the least spark of Christ's love, at once they would seek with all industry by what way they might come to the service of God, and they would not cease from seeking till they had found. They often make excuse, which rather accuses them more.

Riches, indeed, draw many, and the blandishments of women beguile them, and they that have long done well are sometimes drowned by them in the worst ditch. For fairness is soon loved, and when it feels itself loved it is easily cherished, and the chosen one is cast down and he is made worse after turning or conversion than he was before. Then his name is blackened, and he that was worthy before is now despised and hated by all men.

For I saw a man of whom they said that for fifteen years he chastised his body with marvellous sharpness, and afterwards turning aside into sin with his servant's wife could not be parted from her till his death. Indeed they said that in his dying he cursed the priests that came to him, and refused to receive the Sacraments.

The newly converted ought therefore to fly from all occasion of sin, and avoid with their will any word, deed or sight tending to evil. The more unlawful a thing is the more it is to be

forsaken. The devil also strongly upbraids them whom he sees turned from him and turned to God, and ceases not to kindle in them fleshly and worldly desire. He brings to mind delights enjoyed before, to the desolation of the contrite, and unprofitable desires are stirred up that before were quenched. Amongst these it behoves the penitent to employ himself manfully and take ghostly armour, to withstand the devil and all his suggestions, to quench fleshly desires, and ever to desire the love of God and to go not from Him, despising the world ; of which we shall now speak.

Chapter II.—Of the Despising of this World

To despise this world is to pass this life without the love of temporal and passing things, in this way to seek nothing but God, caring not for any vainglory or solace, scarcely taking thy necessaries, and if thou dost some time want, bear it well. This is the despising of the world. Have this in mind if thou wilt not be slain. Thus is the world despised when it is not loved.

For all that we love we worship ; it is foul to worship dirt, and that is to love earthly things. Thus it is that rich misers bind themselves thrall to foulest filth and stink, and rejoice to be called lords of men, though they be in thrall to vices. If a man be lord of men, not by nature, that is, but by fortune, that man is subject to vice and is of froward will. Put away therefore thy wicked will and thou shalt be free from the fiend, and from sin thou shalt be made the servant of righteousness, that teaches thee not to love earthly things.

Covetousness of the world and the love of God are truly contrary and rest not together in one soul ; the place is so narrow that the one or the other falls out. The more surely thou dost

cast out covetousness the more thou dost taste the love of God : the more covetousness, the less charity. O wretched soul, what seekest thou in this world where thou seest all things deceitful and passing? They beguile thee soonest that flatter thee most. Why carest thou for mortal things? Why yearnest thou with great desire for the things that shall perish? Dost thou not see that they perish sooner than they are gained? "But I know where thou dwellest, where the seat of Satan is"; who has blinded thine eyes and by his falsehood deceived thee, so that thou shouldst desire fleeting things, and love hateful things, being drawn to vanishing things and despising abiding things. And so thou dost set thyself upon a false ground, and when thou thinkest to stand thou fallest into the fire.

Those that dwell in temporal plenty are beguiled by five things that they love : by riches, by dignity, by will, by power, and by worship. These bind them in sin and constrain them in faults ; they are overcome by these lusts and never released but by death—but their release is too late, when there is nothing more but endless pain.

These things hinder them from despising the world, from the love of God, from knowledge of themselves and from the desire of the heavenly kingdom. No man may be saved unless he cease to love the world, with all that is therein. Cease, therefore, whilst heat is in the body and yet the fair age of youth remains. What things shall please him that disposes himself to love Christ? Youth he shall despise ; his strength he shall keep for God ; riches he shall count for nothing ; he shall take heed that the fairness of this vanity is a deceitful grace. He shall despise perfectly all things that pass as shadows through this world. O fleshly lover, what dost thou find in the flesh? Wherefore dost thou

so delight in it? Does the form or shape please thee, or hast thou now thy joy in a skin? Why takest thou no heed of what is hid under the skin? Or dost thou not know that fleshly fairness is a covering of filth and the dregs of corruption, and often the cause of damnation?

Let it be enough for thee, therefore, having despised all other things, to love God, to praise God, to be with God, to rejoice in God, not to part from Him but to draw unto Him with unquenched desire. Compel thyself to despise the world that is so full of wretchedness, in which is abiding malice, destroying persecution, swelling wrath and devouring lust, false blame for sins, bitterness of slander; where all things are confused without order, where neither righteousness is loved nor truth approved, where faithfulness is unfaithful and friendship cruel, that stands in prosperity and falls in adversity.

There are yet other things that should move us to the despising of the world: the changing of the times, shortness of this present life, certain death, the uncertain chance of death, stability of everlasting things and vanity of present things, truth of the joys to come. Choose which you will: if thou lovest the world, thou shalt perish with it; if thou lovest Christ, with Him shalt thou reign.

Chapter III.—Of Poverty

"If thou wilt be perfect, go sell all that thou hast and give it to the poor, and come and follow Me, Christ." He shows that there is perfection in the forsaking of worldly things and the following of Christly things. Forsooth, all do not follow Christ that have forsaken their goods, for many are worse after forsaking them than they were before. For certain of them then fall to

backbiting and do not fear to take away the good fame of their neighbours; they are swollen with envy, they rage in malice, they set themselves before all others, they praise their state, they either dispraise or damn all others. Dost thou not see that the devil has beguiled such, that have neither the world nor God, whom by divers wiles he leads to endless torment?

Thou that dost understand what I have said, take thy poverty another way. When He says "Go and sell" He indicates a changing of thy desires and of thy thought. For example, that he that was proud be now lowly, he that was wrathful be now meek, he that was envious be now full of charity, he that was before covetous be now generous and discreet: and if he were unclean he should now abstain not only from all evil but from all semblance of evil. And if he did before exceed by meat or drink, let him now amend by fasting. He that loved the world too much, now let him gather himself altogether to the love of Christ; let him make fast all the flutterings of his heart on the desire of everlasting things. And so without doubt, voluntary poverty shall be fruitful to him, and the hurt that he suffers for God a glorious crown.

"*Beati pauperes spiritu, quoniam ipsorum est regnum cœlorum*"; that is to say: "Blessed are they that are poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." What is poverty of spirit but meekness of mind, by which a man knows his own infirmity? Seeing that he may not come to perfect stability but by the grace of God, he forsakes all things that might hinder him from that grace, and sets his desire only in the glory of his Maker. And as from a root may spring many branches, so from wilful poverty taken in this wise unimagined virtues and marvels proceed. Not as some that change their clothes and not their souls: truly it

seems that they forsake riches, but they cease not to gather innumerable vices.

What is worse than a poor man proud, what more cursed than an envious beggar? If thou truly forsakest all things for God, see what thou despisest rather than what thou forsakest. Take heed busily that thou followest Christ in manners. "*Discite, inquit, a me quia mitis sum et humilis corde.*" "Learn of Me," he says, "for I am meek and lowly of heart." He does not say: "Learn of Me, for I am poor." Poverty by itself is no virtue, but rather wretchedness, nor to be praised for itself, but because it is the instrument of virtue, and helps to get blessedness, and makes many eschew many occasions of sin; and on that account it is to be praised and desired.

If a man be very virtuous it hinders him from being honoured; but rather it makes him despised, and looked down upon and cast out from among the lovers of the world: to suffer all of which for Christ is wholly meritorious. Therefore Christ led a poor life in this way for our example, for He knew that for them that swell in riches and the pleasure thereof it is hard to enter heaven. Therefore, that men should more eagerly desire poverty, to them that forsake all things for Him He has promised high honour and the judicial power, saying: "*Vos qui reliquistis omnia et secuti estis me, sedebitis super sedes duodecim, judicantes duodecim tribus Israel*"; that is to say: "Ye that have forsaken all things and followed Me, shall sit on twelve seats, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

Verily, they that have voluntary poverty and lack the meekness and lowliness that Christ teaches are more wretched than they that have plenty of all riches; and in the day of judgment they shall not take the place proper to the worthiness of apostles, but they

shall be clad with the doublet of confusion, which is damnation of body and soul. Indeed, they that shine in meekness and lowliness, though they have great riches, shall be set on the right hand of Christ when He judges.

Some men say, however : "We cannot leave everything, we are sick, it behoves us to keep our necessaries that we may live, and that is lawful." But they are the less worth because they dare not suffer anguish, poverty and need for God. Yet by the grace of God they may come to the height of virtue and raise themselves to the contemplation of heavenly things if they forsake secular occupations and errands, rising unwearily to think and pray, and holding the goods that they have, not for loving but having them to forsake. Let them take heed also that it is foul covetousness to seek more than enough, it is frailty to keep necessaries ; but to forsake all things for Christ is perfection. Therefore whilst they esteem those things to be higher that they do not reach, let them not have pride nor presumption in the small things that they have, so that they may deserve to ascend to the establishment of ordered life, of which it now follows.

Chapter IV.—Of the Setting of Man's Life

That a man be rightly directed to the worship of God and to his own profit and that of his neighbour, four things are to be told :

Firstly, what it is that defiles a man. And that is three sins or three kinds of sin—namely, of thought, of mouth, and of work. A man sins in thought when he thinks anything against God, if he occupy not his heart with the love and praise of God, but suffers it to be distracted with divers thoughts and allows it to wander about the world. He sins in mouth when he lies, when

he forswears, when he curses, when he backbites, when he defends a wrong, when he brings forth fond, foul, vain or idle speech. He sins in deed in many ways : by lechery, sinfully touching or kissing, wilfully defiling himself, or procuring or sustaining without great cause occasions by which he knows he might be defiled ; by robbing, stealing, beguiling, smiting, and so on.

Secondly, what is it that cleanses a man ? And there are three things against the three aforesaid sins ; that is to say : contrition of thought and the expulsion of desires that belong not to the praise or worship of God ; confession of mouth, that ought to be timely, bare and whole ; satisfaction of work, which has three parts — namely, fasting because he has sinned against himself, prayer because he has sinned against God, almsdeeds because he has sinned against his neighbour. Yet I say that he should not give alms of other men's goods, but he shall restore, for the sin is not forgiven unless that which is withdrawn is restored.

Thirdly, what keeps cleanness of heart ? And there are three things : first, a lively thought of God, that there be no time in which thou dost not think of God, except in sleep, which is common to all ; second, a careful keeping of thy outward wits, that tasting, smelling, hearing, and seeing be wisely restrained under the bridle of control ; third, honest occupation, be it reading or talking of God, or writing, or other useful work. Similarly there are three things that keep cleanness of mouth : considered speech, to beware of much speech, and to hate lying. Also three things keep cleanness of working : moderation in food, avoiding evil company, and being often mindful of death.

Fourthly, what are the things that induce us to conform ourselves to God's will ? And there are three : example of creatures, that we have by beholding them ; familiarity with

God, that is gained by meditation and prayer; and joy of the heavenly kingdom, that is felt in a manner by contemplation.

And so the man of God set to live in this wise shall be as a tree that is set by the running and flowing waters of grace, that shall always be green in virtue and never dry through sin, that shall give fruit in due time, that is good works for example, and good words to the worship of God, and this he shall not sell for vainglory. He says "in due time" against them that give example of fasting when it is time for eating, and the reverse way also; and against miserly men that give their fruit when it is rotten, or else do not give until they die.

Therefore he prayed wisely that said: "*Bonitatem et disciplinam et scientiam doce me*"; that is to say: "Teach me goodliness, discipline, and skill." What is discipline but the setting or correcting of manners? Firstly, therefore, by discipline we are taught righteousness and corrected of evil; and after that we know what we should do and what we should avoid. At last we have savour in no fleshly thing but in things everlasting, heavenly, and godly.

And when a man with all diligence has addressed himself to the will of his Maker and grown in virtue, and peradventure he has passed others that went before in steadfastness of living and desire of Christ, he ought not to rejoice therefor, nor to give praise to himself, nor to think himself better than others though they be lowly, but rather hold himself most foul and most wretched.

He shall judge no man but himself, and set all others before himself; he shall not desire to be called holy by men, but worthy to be despised. When he comes among men he should procure to be the last in number and least in opinion. For the greater

thou art, make thyself the more meek in all things, then shalt thou come into the presence of God, to the grace of joy which is neither carnal nor earthly, but heavenly and divine.

For the might of God is great and worshipped by the meek ; by the proud, therefore, it is despised, for they seek their own glory, not the honour of God. If thou dost glory in the favour of the people and dost joyfully take to thyself, for fame in thy life, the honour offered by the mob, know well that thou hast received thy reward.

And however marvellous in penance and chastity thou dost appear whilst thou dost rejoice more in the glory of men than of angels, in time to come there shall be naught but torment for thee. Thou shouldst truly despise thyself perfectly and inwardly decline all glory of this world, to think or do nothing except in view of the love of God, that all thy life, inward and outward, may cry the praises of God.

In meat and drink be thou sparing and wise. Whilst thou dost eat or drink remember thy God who feeds thee, that He pass not from thy mind, but praise, bless and glorify Him in every morsel, so that thy heart be more on the praise of God than on thy meat, that thy soul be not parted at any hour from God. Doing thus, before Christ Jesus thou shalt be worthy of an ineffable crown, and thou shalt escape the temptations of the devil, that await men most in meat and drink and beguile them. Others, verily, are cast down from the height of virtue by immoderate taking of food, or by too much abstinence they fail in that virtue. For there are many that always fluctuate in eating, so that they always take too much or too little, and they never keep the form of living, whilst they think now this and now that to be better.

Beginners, who have never felt the sweetness of Christ's love,

suppose unwise abstinence to be holiness, and they think that they may not have great merit in the sight of God unless they be singled out among men for sparing and indiscreet abstinence. But of a truth abstinence in itself is not holiness ; yet if it be discreet it helps a man to be holy. If it be indiscreet it hinders holiness, for so it destroys the discipline without which virtues are turned to vices.

If a man will take upon himself singular abstinence, he ought to shun the sight and praise of men, that he be not proud for nothing and so lose everything. For men think those the more holy whom they see more abstinent, when in truth they are often inferior, because they are less fervent in the love of Christ. Certainly he that has truly tasted the sweetness of endless love shall never by abstinence deem himself to surpass any man, but he shall suppose himself the lower, inasmuch as he is held marvellous in abstinence in the sight of men.

I consider it is best and pleasing to God to conform thyself in meat and drink with the time and the place and the dignity of them with whom thou art, so that thou dost not seem too scrupulous or a feigner of religion.

Know truly, without a doubt, if one or two think well of a man, yet others will call him a hypocrite or an impostor. But there are some who are covetous of vainglory that in no wise will be held as common men, for either they eat so little that they always draw the talk of men to them, or they procure other kinds of meats to be seen different from other men—whose madness and obstinacy be far from me !

Truly, wholesome counsel is that they who fast little give preference to them of greater abstinence, and since they may not practise so much abstinence, be sorry in mind. And they who

are of great abstinence should suppose others higher in virtue, whose virtue, in which they surpass, is hidden from men. For whilst their virtue of abstinence is praised by many, yet unless vainglory is totally expelled and it be clothed in meekness and charity, it is nothing to Christ. Verily the virtue of others is the more in that it is not seen by men. Who may know how great a love a man has towards God, how great a compassion towards his neighbour? And without doubt the virtue of charity surpasses beyond comparison all fasting or abstinence and all other works that may be seen outwardly. And often it happens that he who before men is seen to fast least is inwardly most fervent in love before Christ.

It behoves him to be truly strong that will manfully practise love of God. When the flesh is made very feeble with great discomfort,[1] a man oftentimes cannot pray, and so he is the more unable to lift himself to high things with fervent desire. I would rather therefore that a man failed for greatness of love than for too much fasting, as the spouse said of herself: "*Nunciate dilecto meo quia amore langueo*"; that is: "Show to my love that I languish for love."

Be thou therefore steadfast in all thy ways and direct thy life according to the rule shown to thee. And if thou mayest not get in the beginning what thou desirest, cease not to trust, but persevere, for by long use and time thou shalt come to perfection. If thou art a pilgrim and dost rest by the way, whatever thou dost in this way, keep the eyes of thy mind ever towards God; let not thy thought go from Him, think that time lost in which thou thinkest not of God. In the night praise Him and desire His love, that sleep find thee in no other wise occupied

[1] *i.e.* through fasting.

than in praying or in thinking of God. See that thou waste not thy mind with vain thoughts, nor give thyself to many cares, but study this: to get and to hold steadfastness of mind, that thou fearest not the evils of the world, nor dost desire immoderately the good things thereof.

He that dreads to suffer adversity knows not yet how it behoves him to despise this world, and he that rejoices in earthly things is far from everlasting things. Verily to the virtue of fortitude it belongs to despise all adversities and prosperities, even death itself, for endless life. And charity alone is heavenly to desire. For a perfect lover rejoices to die, and suffers life meekly. Yet if thou dost ascend to such perfection by Christ's gift, thou shalt not be without tribulation and temptation; to show which our words shall now turn.

Chapter V.—Of Tribulation

When the fiend sees one man out of thousands perfectly turned to God, following Christ's steps, despising this present world, loving and seeking only things unseen, taking perfect penance, purging himself from all filth of mind and body, he prepares a thousand hurtful beguilings, a thousand crafts of fighting, to cast him from the love of God to the love of the world, and so to defile him with the filth of sin, that through lecherous thoughts he should be hated of God.

He raises against him persecution, tribulation, slander, blame of false crimes, varieties of hatred, so that pains may flay and break him whom prosperity might not beguile. Now sharpness, now encouragement, he puts before him. He brings to mind images of bodily things, he gathers a fantasy of sin to the mind,

he recalls old shrewdness and pleasure of past love, he inflames the heart and the flesh with lecherous fire.

Beginning with the least, he comes to the greatest flame of wickedness. And he blows against us all kinds of temptation, torment, and tribulation with the more industry as he grieves that we have escaped from his jaws by the mercy of God. He cares for nothing but to part us from the unbodily embrace, most chaste and most sweet, of love everlasting, and so defile us in the pit of wretchedness and filth, that were more wretched to us than I can tell. Who can imagine the madness of him that would freely come down from the delights of kings to swine-meat ?

And yet he is more mad that forsakes the most delicious foods of the uncreated Wisdom and puts himself under the filth of the flesh. Are not gluttony and lechery swinely filth, and do not they that use them feed fiends ? Therefore how to act against the tribulation and temptation of our enemies and to withstand them, patience shall teach us, of which we will now speak.

Chapter VI.—Of Patience

God's children disdain to come to the meat of unreasonable beasts, and they truly despise all unlawful lusts and worldly solace for the love of Christ. Verily he that is fed with the bread that came down from heaven inclines not his desire to those that are stirred by the devil. When temptations rise, or tribulation, ghostly armour must be put on, and it is time to go to battle.

For temptations are overcome by steadfastness of faith and the love of Christ, and tribulation by patience. For what is patience

but free and voluntary suffering of adversity. Therefore he that is patient grumbles not in grief, but rather with the prophet praises God at all times.

The more patient a man is in his sufferings the more glorious he shall be in heaven. Gladly, therefore, are tribulations, the bitterness of privation, and sickness and penury suffered, for by these and other such means our sins are cleansed and our merits increased. For either we must be cleansed in the fire of divine love and of tribulation in this life and so purged from worldly filth, or after this life be bitterly crucified in the fire of purgatory or hell.

Choose, therefore : the one or the other thou shalt not escape. So if we draw to God here with a little pain, joyfully we may be able to escape all future pain. Therefore tribulations are sent to us to call us from the love of the world, that in the next life we be not more grievously punished. For it behoves us to be cleansed with sorrow who did evil in lust.

If sinners build upon our back, they hurt not us but themselves, if we suffer it patiently. For if they put us to a little pain they make a crown for us and torment for themselves. The sinful are suffered to pass this life without great tribulation because no glory is kept for them in time to come.

Therefore holy men love tribulation, for they know that they may win endless life thereby. Contrarily, the reproved always grumble in adversities and avoid them as much as they can ; for whilst they are too much given to visible things they are deprived of hope of things everlasting. They find solace only in outward things, for they have completely lost the savour of heaven.

There is no reasonable soul abiding here but either it loves

creatures or the Maker of creatures. If it loves creatures it loses God, and with the thing it loves it goes to destruction.

Verily such love in the beginning is labour and fondness, in the middle languor and wretchedness, and in the end hatred and pain.

He that truly loves his Maker forsakes all that is in the world, and he thinks it most sweet to speak of Him and with Him, and his refreshment is to think on Him. He shuts his outward wits, that death enter not by the windows, and that he be not unprofitably occupied in vanity. And sometimes there are raised against him despisings, reproofs, scorn and slander, and therefore it is necessary to take the shield of patience and be more ready to forget wrongs than to know them ; to pray for their conversion who hate him and cast him down ; and to care not to please men but fear to offend God.

If thou art tempted in the flesh, make it subject, that the spirit succumb not. For that we do not consent to temptation is a matter of practising virtue. Certainly no man knows whether he is weak or strong until the time when he is tried. Likewise, no man ought to be called patient in peace, but when he is racked with wrong he shall see clearly if he has patience. Many seem patient when they are not pricked, but when a soft blast (I say not of wrong but of correction) touches them, their minds at once turn to bitterness and wrath ; and if they hear one word against their will they give back two more ungodly : into whose counsels may my soul never come.

The darts of our enemy are to be quenched with the meekness and sweetness of Christ's love, nor can we give place to temptation, however grievous. For the greater the battle the worthier victory and the higher crown, as says the psalm : "*Beatus vir*

qui suffert temptationem, quoniam cum probatus fuerit accipiet coronam vitæ," etc.; that is to say: "Blessed be the man that suffers temptation, for when he is proved he shall take the crown of life that God promised to His lovers."

Doubt not that thou art in perfect life if contempt be as praise to thee, poverty as riches, hunger as feasting, so that for God's sake thou dost suffer them with even soul and fallest not in anything from elevation of mind. Hate and fly from man's praise as much as thou mayest, for it is most praiseworthy to be worthy of praise and not to wish to be praised by men. The tongues of flatterers beguile many, and the tongues of backbiters destroy many.

Despise therefore favour, worship and all vainglory; meekly suffer wraths, hatreds and detractions; and so by slander and good fame, by tribulation and anger, cease not to make thy way to the heavenly kingdom.

Often we fall that, taught by many instances, we may stand the stronger. The strong man fears not, nor is the patient man sad in adversity, as it is written: "*Non tristabit justum quicquid ei acciderit . . .*"; "Whatever happens to the just man, it shall not make him sad." Thus disposed, without doubt thou shalt overcome all temptation and quench all malice; thou shalt see thy oppressors more wretched, and with all thy mind thou shalt cleave to Christ.

Chapter VII.—Of Prayer

If thou art beset with temptation, run to prayer at once. For if thou dost chastely pray, thou shalt have help. Sometimes there come flutterings and waverings of heart, and thoughts ravish the

heart to divers things and suffer it not to stand in the praise of God. Then peradventure it were good to meditate a while on holy things, to make the mind more stable so that one's prayers may be fulfilled.

Truly, if any have left all worldly occupations for the love of Christ and be given entirely to holy meditation and prayer, I believe that by God's grace they shall find their hearts established in love and prayer within a short space ; not wavering now into this and now into that, but rather abiding in rest and endless peace.

It is a very great comfort to get this stability of heart, to be busily occupied in prayers and devoutly singing psalms. For by prayer we overcome the devils, and by prayer we weaken their attentions and urgings. They are made feeble and as it were without strength whilst we remain strong and insuperable in prayer.

In those men who are accustomed to pray by long exercise is sometimes found more sweetness and more fervent desire of praying. Therefore whilst that sweetness and ardour last it is good not to cease from prayers. When they cease—as often happens because of the corruptible flesh—it is useful to turn to the contemplation of Holy Scripture or do some other profitable thing, so that they suffer not their thoughts to waver from God, that when they rise to pray they may be more ardent than they were before.

Verily then we pray well when we think of nothing else but God, and all our mind is directed to heaven and our soul is inflamed with the fire of the Holy Ghost. Thus a marvellous plenty of God's goodness is found in us, for the love of God shall rise from the innermost marrow of our hearts, and all our

prayer shall be with proper disposition, so that we do not overrun the words but we shall offer almost every syllable with a great cry and desire to Our Lord.

Our heart being kindled with a fervent love, our prayer also is kindled and offered from our mouth in the savour of sweetness in the sight of God, so that it is a great joy to pray. For whilst in prayer a marvellous sweetness is given to him who prays, the prayer is changed into song.

Here some are to be reproved that take heed rather of meditation than of prayer, not knowing that it is the burning speech of God by which the filth of sins is cleansed and the minds of those who pray are inflamed with love. They say they will first think that so they may make stable their hearts, but they are led more slowly to that stability who are not continually strengthened by prayer. Though we may not all gather our hearts together as quickly as we would, yet we ought not on that account to leave off, but we must study by degrees to grow, that at last Jesus Christ may deign to make us stable. To which meditation helps, if it exceed not in measure and manner.

Chapter VIII.—Of Meditation

It is good to meditate on the Passion of Christ and His death, and to recall often what pains and wretchedness He freely took upon Himself for our salvation in wandering and preaching, in hunger, thirst, cold, heat, reproofs, cursings and sufferings, so that it might not appear hard for an unprofitable servant to follow his Lord and Emperor. Verily, he that says he dwells in Christ ought to go as He did. Christ truly says, by Jeremy: "Be mindful of my poverty and my passage, of wormwood and gall,

that is to say, of sorrow and bitterness, by which I went from the world to the Father."

This memory or meditation overcomes the fiend and destroys his traps, it quenches carnal temptations and kindles the soul to the love of Christ, it raises, cleanses and purges the mind. I believe that this thought is most profitable of all to them that are newly turned to Christ. For on that account is shown the manhood of Christ, in which man should delight anew, in which he has matter for joy and also mourning—joy for the sureness of our redemption, sadness for the filth of our sin, for which it is to be deplored that so worthy a sacrifice was offered.

But the rude fleshly soul is not ravished into the beholding of the Godhead unless it be ghostly, all fleshly hindrances being done away. When a man begins to have a clean heart, and no image of bodily things may beguile it, then he is certainly admitted to higher things, that he may be wonderfully glad in the love of God.

Some think of the joy of blessed angels and of the holy souls of those rejoicing with Christ, and this thought belongs to contemplation. Others think of the wretchedness of man's condition and his filth, and in their thoughts they consider the folly of man who, for the vanities of this life, forgets the joys unseen. Others so dispose their thoughts that they express nothing but the praise and desire of their Maker, that they may love Him as much as is possible to men in this life.

No man, however, achieves this meditation but he that is much exercised in these matters aforesaid. Moreover, this is more excellent than other things, and it makes a man most contemplative.

Therefore, as there are divers works and practices of saints, so

they have divers thoughts. Yet all, since they come of one spring go to one end, and they come or lead to one bliss but by divers ways, by one charity that is more in one than in another.

Wherefore the psalm says: "*Deduxit me super semitas justitiæ*"; that is: "He has led me upon the paths of righteousness," as if to say, there is one righteousness and many paths by which men are led to the glory of life everlasting. For whilst all existing in unity are of divers merits, in one righteousness they are led by divers paths to God; some go by a low path, some by a middle, and some by a high.

To him, however, is given the higher path who is ordained from the beginning to love Christ more abundantly, not because he works more than others, or gives more or suffers more, but because he loves more. Which love is fervour and sweetness and seeks rest in all things.

No man may set himself on any of these paths, but he takes that to which God has chosen him. Sometimes they that seem on the higher are on the lower, and the reverse. For that appears only inwardly in the soul before God and not in anything that a man may do outwardly. They are directed to this path or to that, according to the disposition and desire of their meditation. It may not be known by outward works who is greater or less before God. Therefore it is foolish to judge of the chosen and say this one excels that, or the merits of this one are far from the merits of that, when they know not their minds inwardly; which, if they knew, then they might lawfully judge.

Truly, therefore, God wishes all creatures to be uncertain of this, that they despise not some too much nor worship some too much; for doubtless if they saw men's hearts, many that they worship they would despise as stinking and foul, and others that

they set nothing by, nor even desire to see, they would worship as most lovely and holy angels. And so the good thoughts and meditations of the chosen are of God, and such He sheds by His grace upon each one as best accords with his estate and condition.

Therefore thou canst tell me thy meditations, but which is most effective for thee I cannot explain, for I see not thy inward desires. I believe certainly that these meditations in thee please God most and profit thee, which God by His mercy sheds upon thee. Nevertheless, in the beginning thou canst make use of other men's words, as I know well myself.

Verily if thou dost despise the teaching of the doctors and suppose that thou mayest find better thyself than they teach thee in their writing, know, forsooth, that thou shalt not taste of Christ's love; for it is a foolish saying that "God taught them; why therefore shall He not teach me?" I answer: "Because thou art not such as they were. Thou art proud and sturdy, they were lowly and meek, and they asked nothing of God presuming, but humbling themselves under all men they accepted the knowledge of the saints. Therefore He taught them so that we in their books might be taught."

Certainly if thy meditations now desire Christ's love, or sound His praises, then it seems to me thou art well disposed, and the thoughts in which thou feelest more sweetness in God profit thee more. For to meditate without sweetness profits thee little, except in that case in which, because of need, sweetness is not felt.

Chapter IX.—Of Reading

If thou dost seek to come to the love of God and to be kindled with the desire for heavenly joys, and brought to despise earthly things, be not negligent in thinking upon and reading Holy Scripture, chiefly in the places where it inculcates good manners and teaches one to beware of the ways and deceits of the devil, and where it speaks of the love of God and of contemplative life. The harder sentences should be left to disputers and clever men long practised in holy doctrine.

This helps us to profit greatly in good. By this we know our faults and good deeds, in what we sin and in what not, what we shall do and what forbear; and the most subtle deceits of our enemies are disclosed to us.

The Scriptures kindle us to love and prick us to weeping. They prepare for us a table of delights if we have delight in them, as in all riches—if no desire for worship, favour or the praise of men set us to the knowledge of scripture, but only the intention of pleasing God that we may know how we should love Him and teach the same to our neighbour. We must not wish to be held learned in the sight of the people, but we ought rather to hide our knowledge than show it for praise, as it is said: "*In corde meo abscondi eloquia tua ut non peccem tibi*"; that is: "In my heart I hid Thy words, that I might not sin against Thee" in empty or vain display.

Let, therefore, the cause of our speaking be only the praise of God and the edification of our neighbour, that it may be fulfilled of us: "*Semper laus ejus in ore meo*"; "May His praise be always in my mouth," and that is when we seek not praise of ourselves, and we speak not against His praise.

Chapter X.—Of Cleanness of Mind

By these nine degrees before touched upon man comes to cleanness of mind, where God is seen. Cleanness, I mean, such as may be had in this life—how can perfect cleanness be gained here, where man is so often defiled, with venial sins at least? The feet of saints must be washed, for they draw dust of the earth. Who may truly say "I am clean from sin"? Certainly none in this life.

For as Job says: "*Si lotus fuero aquis nivis et effulserint velut munditiæ manus meæ, tamen sordibus intinges me et abhominabuntur me vestimenta mea*"; that is to say: "*If I be washed with the water of snow*," by which is meant true penance, "*and if my hands shine with cleanness*," because of works of innocence, "*yet shalt thou touch me with filth*," because of venial sins that may not be eschewed, "*and my clothes shall abhor me*"; that is to say, my flesh makes me abhor myself, and sensuality, that is so frail and slippery, and ready to love the pleasing things of this world, often makes me sin.

Therefore the apostle says: "*Non regnet peccatum in nostro mortali corpore*"; "*Let not sin reign in our mortal body*," as much as to say: "Sin may cease to reign in us, but it may not cease to be." What cleanness, therefore, may a man have in this life? Truly worthy and great if he rightfully exercise himself in the study of reading, prayer and meditation, as it has been explained before.

For though he sometimes sin venially, yet because his whole mind is directed to God the sin is soon destroyed. Indeed the heat of charity in him consumes all the rust of sin as if it were a drop of water put into a great fire.

The strength of a cleansed soul, therefore, is to have the mind intent on God, for in this state all thought is directed to Christ, all the mind is extended towards Him, even though one seems to speak to others. For there is nothing in a clean conscience that is bitter, sharp or hard, but all is sweet, all is lovely.

From cleanness of heart there rises a song of glory, a most sweet ditty and joyful mirth. Then very often a wonderful joy of God is given and heavenly song is infused. In this state a man may know that he is in charity which he shall never lose. Yet he lives not without great fear, not lest he incur torment but lest he offend his most beloved Jesus.

I forbear to say more here because I myself seem a very great wretch. For my flesh is often hurt and tried. Nevertheless, though in all these things aforesaid the love of God and contemplative life are contained, yet something is to be said more specially of them for your use and profit.

Chapter XI.—Of the Love of God

O sweet and delectable Light, that is my Infinite Maker, enlighten the face and the vision of my inward eye with uncreated charity, and kindle my mind with Thy savour, that, thoroughly cleansed from uncleanness and made marvellous with Thy gifts, it may swiftly fly to the high mirth of love; that I may sit and rest in Thee, Jesus, rejoicing and going, as it were, ravished with heavenly sweetness; and that, established in the beholding of invisible things, I shall never be glad but in divine things.

O Love everlasting, inflame my soul to love God, that nothing may burn in me but His embraces. O good Jesus, who shall grant me to feel Thee Who now neither may be felt nor seen?

Shed Thyself into the entrails of my soul ! Come into my heart and fill it with Thy most excellent sweetness. Inebriate my mind with the hot wine of Thy sweet love, that, forgetting all evils and all scornful visions and imaginations, and having Thee alone, I may be glad and rejoice in Jesus my God. Henceforward, sweetest Lord, go not from me, but abide with me in Thy sweetness, for Thy presence alone is solace to me and Thine absence alone leaves me sad.

O Holy Ghost, that givest grace where Thou wilt, come into me and ravish me to Thyself. The nature that Thou didst make, change with honeysweet gifts, that my soul, filled with Thy delightful joy, may despise and cast away all the things of this world, that it may receive ghostly gifts, given by Thee, and going with joyful songs into infinite light may be all melted in holy love. Burn with Thy fire my reins and my heart that on Thine altar shall burn for ever.

Come, I beseech Thee, O sweet and true Joy ! Come, sweet and most desired ! Come, my love, Who art all my comfort ! Come with mellifluous heat into a soul longing for Thee and yearning with sweetest ardour towards Thee. Kindle with Thy heat the whole of my heart, enlightening with Thy light my inmost parts ; feed me with the honeysweet song of love, as much as the powers of my body and soul can endure!

Rejoice in this and such meditations, that so doing thou mayest ascend to the very core of love. Love truly suffers not a loving soul to abide in itself, but ravishes it out of itself to the beloved, so that the soul may be more where it loves than where the body is that lives and feels because of it.

There are, indeed, three degrees of the love of Christ in which, from one to another, he that is chosen to love proceeds.

The first is called *Insuperable*, the second *Inseparable*, and the third *Singular*.

Love is truly *Insuperable* when it may not be overcome by any other desire, when for Christ a man freely casts off all hindrances, when he quenches all temptations and fleshly desires, and when he suffers patiently all burdens for Christ and is overcome by no flattery or pleasure. All labour is light to a lover; no man may better overcome labour than by love.

Love is truly *Inseparable* when the mind is kindled with great love and drawn to Christ with undivided thought, when one does not for a single moment allow Him to pass out of mind, but as one is bound to Him in heart one thinks of Him, sighs for Him, cries to be held with His love, to be loosened from the fetters of mortality, and to be led to Him, whom alone one desires to see. And one worships and loves the name of Jesus so greatly that it rests perpetually in the mind.

When, therefore, the love of Christ is so much set in the heart of the lover of God and the despiser of the world that it may not be overcome by any other desire of love, it is called highest; but when a man holds to Christ inseparably, ever thinking of Christ, on no occasion forgetting Him, it is called everlasting and inseparable. And what shall be capable of greater or higher if this be most high and everlasting?

Yet there is the third degree that is called *Singular*. For it is one thing to be most high and another thing to be alone, as it is different to be ever foremost and to have no equal. We may truly have many fellows and yet have a place before all. If, then, thou dost truly seek or receive any comfort than of thy God, and if thou dost peradventure rejoice exceedingly, yet not singularly, thereby thou seest how much more worthiness is necessary, when

already thou art most high and yet thou mightest not be alone. Love ascends, therefore, to a singular degree when it excludes all comfort but that which is in Jesus, when nothing but Jesus may suffice. The soul set in this degree loves Him alone; it thirsts only for Christ, yearns for Christ, pants with sole desire for Him; for Him it sighs, in Him it burns, and in Him alone it rests fervent. Nothing is sweet to it, it savours nothing unless it be made sweet in Jesus, Whose remembrance is as a melody of music in a feast of wine.

Whatever else offers itself, or whatever comes to mind, is quickly cast back and instantly despised if it serve not His desire or accord not with His will. It suppresses forcibly all habits that serve not to the love of Christ. Whatever be done seems unprofitable and intolerable unless it runs and leads to Christ, the end of his desire.

When a man may love Christ he believes that he has all things that he wishes to have, and without Him all things are abhorrent and grow foul. But because he thinks to love Him endlessly he bides steadfastly in body and wearies not in heart, but loves perseveringly, and suffers all things gladly. And the more he lives in Him thus, the more he is kindled in love and made like to Him.

Undoubtedly such solitude is most acceptable which has no association amongst men. He is the more ravished inwardly to joy as he is less occupied with outward things, or hindered with the heaviness and cares of this life. And now the soul is, as it were, unable to suffer pain, so that, being hindered by no anguish, it ever rejoices in God.

O my soul, leave the love of this world, and melt wholly in the love of Christ, that it be always sweet to thee to speak of Him, to read, write and think of Him, to pray to Him, and ever to praise Him. O God, my soul to Thee devoted desires to see

Thee; it cries to Thee from afar, in Thee it burns, it longs for Thy love. O Love that fails not, Thou hast overcome me! O everlasting Sweetness and Fairness, Thou hast wounded my heart, and now wounded and overcome I fall. I scarcely live for joy and I nearly die, for I cannot bear the sweetness of so great a majesty in this corruptible flesh.

For all my heart, transfixed with desire for Jesus, is turned into heat of love, and it is swallowed up into another glory and another form. Therefore, O good Jesus, have mercy on me, a wretch; show Thyself to me that longs for Thee, give medicine for my hurt. I feel sick only in languishing in Thy love. He that loves Thee not wholly loses everything; he that follows Thee not is mad. Meanwhile, therefore, be Thou my Joy, my Love and my Desire, till I may see Thee in Sion, God of Gods.

Charity is the noblest of virtues, most excellent and sweetest, that joins the beloved to the lover, and everlastingly couples Christ with the chosen soul. It renews within us the image of the Most High Trinity and makes the creature like to the Creator. O gift of Love! how much more it is worth than all other things, that claims for itself the highest degree with angels! Truly the more Love a man receives in this life the greater and the higher he shall be before God.

O singular joy of interior love, that binding its own with strong bands ravishes them above all worldly things, even up to heaven! O dear charity, he that has thee not on earth loses whatever else he may have. Truly he that rejoices in thee is soon lifted to joy above earthly joy. Thou dost enter boldly into the bed-chamber of the everlasting King, thou alone art not ashamed to take Christ. He it is Whom thou hast sought and loved; Christ is thine; hold Him, for He may not but take thee, Whom alone

thou hast desired to obey. For plainly, without thee no work pleases Him; thou makest all things savoury; thou art a heavenly seat, the fellowship of angels, a marvellous holiness, a blissful sight, and life that lasts endlessly.

O holy charity, how sweet thou art and comfortable! Thou makest whole that which was broken; thou dost restore the fallen, deliver the bound; thou makest man equal to the angels; the sitting and resting thou dost raise, and the risen thou dost make sweet.

In this degree or state of love is love chaste, holy, willing; loving the Beloved for Himself alone, not for His gifts; fixing itself altogether in the Beloved, seeking nothing beyond Him; content with Him, fervent and intense; binding itself to Him in a manner passing marvellous; stretching forth to the Beloved alone, despising and forgetting all other things; rejoicing in the Beloved, thinking on Him without forgetting; ascending in desire, fainting for love, all-embracing, and all melted in the fire of love.

Truly, the lover of Christ observes no order in loving, nor covets any degree; for however fervent and joyful he be in Divine Love in this life, yet he seeks to love God more ardently and more joyfully; yea, though he might live here evermore he would not think of standing still and not progressing in love, but rather the longer he might live the more he would burn in love.

God is truly infinite in greatness, better than we can think, of unmeasured sweetness, incomprehensible to all creatures and natures, never to be comprehended by us as He exists eternally in Himself. But when the mind now begins to burn with desire for its Maker it is made able to receive uncreated light; and then

inspired and filled with the gifts of the Holy Ghost, as much as mortals may be, it abounds in heavenly joy, and surpassing all things in height of mind, it is raised to the sweetness of life everlasting. And whilst the soul is infused with the sweetness of the Godhead and the warmth of the creative light it is offered in sacrifice to the everlasting King, and accepted, and it is wholly burned.

O merry love! strong, ravishing, burning, spontaneous, unquenched, that bringest all my soul to thy service, and suffers it to think of nothing but thee, to thyself thou claimest all that we live, all that we savour, all that we are.

Let Christ, therefore, be the beginning of our love, Whom we love for Himself. So let us love ordinately whatever is to be loved for Him who is the Well of Love, to whom we commend all that we love and are loved by. Here verily is displayed perfect love, when all the intent of mind, the secret working of the heart, is raised to the love of God, so that the might and mirth of true love be so great that no worldly joy nor fleshly merchandise may please even though it be lawful.

O Love inseparable! O singular Love! Even though there were no torments for the wicked, and no reward should be expected by the just in heaven, thou shouldst not any sooner lose hold of thy Love. It were more tolerable for thee to suffer unthinkable grief than to sin once mortally. Therefore shalt thou love God for Himself, so that thou dost love no other thing, not even thyself but for God. And so it follows that nothing but God is loved in thee. Else how may God be all things to all men if there remain any love of man in a man?

O clear charity! Come into me and take me into thee and so present me before my Maker. Thou art a well-tasting savour, a fine-smelling sweetness and a pleasant, cleansing heat, a comfort

lasting endlessly. Thou makest men contemplative, thou dost open heaven's gate, thou dost bar the mouth of accusers, thou makest God visible, and the multitude of sins thou dost hide. We praise thee by whom we overcome the world, by whom we rejoice, and by whom we ascend the heavenly ladder. In thy sweetness come into me : me and mine, I commend to thee for ever.

Chapter XII.—Of Contemplation

Contemplative life or contemplation has three parts : Reading, Prayer, and Meditation. In reading, God speaks to us ; in prayer, we speak to God ; in meditation, angels come down to teach us, that we err not. In prayer they go up and offer our petitions to God, rejoicing in our progress ; they are messengers between God and us. Prayer is, indeed, a devout disposition of the mind directed to God, with which He is pleased when it comes to Him. Meditation on God and godly things, wherein is the embrace of Rachel, is to be taken up after prayer and reading. To reading belongs reason and the inquiry after truth, that is a precious light granted to us. To prayer belongs the song of praise, passing into contemplation and wonder : and so contemplative life or contemplation stands on prayer. To meditation belongs the inspiration of God, understanding, wisdom and aspiration.

If it be asked, what is contemplation, it is hard to define. Some say that contemplative life is nothing but the study of things to come and hidden things, or to be empty of all worldly occupation, or the study of God's letters. Others say that contemplation is a free perception of the vision of wisdom, with higher assistance. Others say that contemplation is a wise and broad outlook of

the soul, upon the prospect of its power and strength. Others say, and well, that contemplation is joy in heavenly things. Others say, best of all, that contemplation is the death of fleshly desires through the joy of an uplifted mind.

To me it seems indeed that contemplation is the joyful song of the love of God taken into the mind, with the sweetness of angelic praise. This is the joy which is the end of perfect prayer and of highest devotion in this life. This is the mirth to be had in the mind for the everlasting lover, breaking out with a great voice into ghostly songs. This is the final and most perfect of all deeds in this life. The psalmist therefore says : "*Beatus vir qui scit jubilationem*" ; that is to say : "Blessed is the man that knows jubilation," in the contemplation of God.

Truly, none that is alien to God may rejoice in Jesus, nor taste the sweetness of His love ; but if he always desire to be kindled with the fire of everlasting love, with patience, meekness and circumspection, to be made fair with all cleanness of body and soul, anointed with ghostly ointments, he may be lifted up into contemplation.

Let him seek without ceasing the saving virtue by which we are cleansed from the wretchedness of sin in this life, and in the next enjoy freedom from all pain, in blessed life for ever. And thus in this exile he shall be worthy to feel the joyful mirth of God's love.

Therefore be not slow to chastise thyself with prayer and watching, and practise holy meditations, for without doubt, by these ghostly labours, by the heaviness and weeping of inward repentance, the love of Christ is kindled in thee, and all virtues are shed into thy heart with the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Begin therefore by voluntary poverty, so that, desiring nothing in this

world, thou dost live soberly, chastely, and meekly before God and man.

To have nothing is sometimes a matter of necessity, but to wish to have nothing is a great virtue. We may, however, have many things and yet not wish to have them when those things which we have we do not keep from desire but from necessity; so in that sense he who has nothing may wish for many things. For it behoves the most perfect to accept necessaries, because he would not be perfect if he refused to take those things whereby he should live.

The way of perfect men is to despise all worldly things for God, yet to take meat and clothing; and if this be lacking at any time, to praise God, and to refuse superfluity as much as they can.

The warmer a man waxes with the heat of everlasting light the more meek shall he be in all adversities. He also that is truly meek, not feigning, holds himself worthy to be despised, and is not provoked to wrath either by injury or reproof. Wherefore humbling himself in busy meditation, it is given to him to rise to the beholding of heavenly things, and the vision of his mind being cleansed as he suffers sickness of the flesh, it is given to him to sing sweetly and ardently with inward joy. And when he goes to seek any outward thing he goes not with a proud foot, but only rejoicing in high delights, as it were ravished in a trance with the sweetness of the love of God, and being marvellously ravished he is glad.

Such, forsooth, is contemplative life, if it be adopted in a proper manner: we come to contemplation of things everlasting by long practice in spiritual works. For the mental vision is taken up on high and beholds heavenly things, yet by a shadowy vision, as in a mirror, not clear and open; because whilst we go by

faith we see, as it were, by a mirror and a shadow. For if our ghostly eye rest upon that spiritual light in contemplation, it may not see that light as it is in itself, and yet it feels that it is there, whilst it holds within it the savour and fervour of boundless light. Wherefore it is said in the psalm : "*Sicut tenebræ ejus ita et lumen ejus*" ; that is : "And as the darkness thereof, so the light thereof."

For though all the darkness of sin may be gone from a holy soul, murky and unclean things passed away, and the mind purged and illumined, yet whilst it bides in this mortal flesh that wonderful joy is not seen perfectly. Forsooth, holy and contemplative men indeed behold the glory of God with a clear face because either their wit is cleared through the understanding of the Scriptures or the door of heaven is opened—which is greater, all obstacles between their minds and God being removed—and the eye of their inmost heart being cleansed, they see the citizens of heaven.

Some, truly, have received the vision in both these ways. As we, standing in darkness, see nothing, so in contemplation that invisibly lights the soul we see no visible light. Christ also rests in darkness and yet to us he speaks in a pillar of cloud ; but that which is felt is most delectable.

In this, verily, is perfect love : when a man going in the flesh cannot be glad but in God, and wills nothing and desires nothing but God and because of God. By this it is shown that holiness is not in the crying of the heart, nor in tears, nor outward works, but in the sweetness of perfect charity and heavenly contemplation. For many have been melted in tears and afterwards turned to evil, but no man defiles himself with worldly business after he has truly tasted everlasting love. Weeping and sorrow belong

to newly converted and progressing beginners, but to sing joyfully and to go in the way of contemplation belongs only to the perfect.

He therefore that does penance for a long time, whilst he feels his conscience yet pricking for default knows without doubt that he has not done perfect penance. Meanwhile, therefore, let tears be as bread to him day and night, for unless he punish himself first with weeping and sighing he may not come to the sweetness of contemplation.

Contemplative sweetness is not gained but with very great labour, and it is possessed with untold joy. Forsooth, it is not man's merit but God's gift; and yet from the beginning to this day a man could never be ravished into the contemplation of everlasting love unless he had first forsaken perfectly all the vanity of the world. Moreover, he must be practised in saving meditation and devout prayer before he may truly come to the contemplation of heavenly joys.

Contemplation is a sweet and desirable labour: it gladdens the labourer and hurts not; no man has it but rejoicing; not when it comes, but when it goes, he is weary.

O goodly labour, to which mortals may direct themselves! O noble and marvellous work, that those who sit may do most perfectly! For it behoves him to take rest of body and mind whom the fire of the Holy Ghost truly inflames. Many, indeed, cannot rest in mind, nor put away empty and unprofitable thoughts, who cannot fulfil what is bidden in the psalm: "*Vacate et videte, quoniam ego sum deus*"; that is to say: "Be void of worldly vanity and see, for I am thy God." For those who are void in body and not void in heart are not worthy to taste and see how sweet the Lord is, how sweet the height of contemplation.

Every contemplative loves solitude, that he may be hindered by no man, that he may more fervently and more often be practised in his desires. Whence it is known therefore that contemplative life is more worthy and more meritorious than active life; and all contemplatives, loving solitary life by the agency of God, and because of the sweetness of contemplation, are especially fervent in love.

It seems that solitaries, raised with the gift of contemplation, are high and touch the highest perfection. But if it happens that there be some in such a state that they have even the height of contemplative life and yet cease not to fulfil the office of a preacher, in this they surpass these other solitaries, very high in contemplation, given only to godly things and not to the needs of their neighbours. In this they excel in such degree that because of preaching they are worthy of a crown.

Verily, a truly contemplative man is set towards the invisible light with such great desire that by men he is often deemed a fool or insane; and that is because his mind is deeply inflamed with the love of Christ, his bodily bearing changes outwardly, and his body also departing from all earthly works, it makes the child of God look like a man out of his mind.

Thus whilst the soul gathers itself together in the endless mirth of love, withdrawing itself inwardly, it flows not forward to seek bodily pleasure. And because it is fed with pleasing inward delight it is no wonder if it says, sighing: "Who shall give me thee, my brother, that I may find thee forth and kiss thee?" that is to say, loosened from the flesh I may be worthy to find thee, and seeing thee face to face, for ever be joined with thee: "and then no man would despise me."

A devout soul given to contemplative life, filled with ever-

lasting love, despises all vainglory of this world and, rejoicing only in Jesus, desires to be freed ; because it is despised by those who love and savour the world and not heaven, and it longs ardently for love and greatly desires to be given to joys that worldly adversity cannot hurt, in the lovely company of angels. There is nothing more profitable and nothing more wonderful than the grace of contemplation that lifts us from this lowness and offers us to God.

What is the grace of contemplation but the beginning of joy ? What is the perfection of joy but grace confirmed ? In which for us is kept a joyful happiness and happy joy, a glorious endlessness and everlasting glory, to live with saints and to dwell with angels.

And that which is above all things is to know God truly, to love Him perfectly, to see Him in the brightness of His majesty, and to praise Him endlessly with wonderfully joyful song and melody. To Whom be worship and joy, with acts of thanksgiving, for ever and ever. Amen.

COMMENTARIES

COMMENTARIES

The Song of Isaias
(*Isaias xii.*)

Confitebor tibi Domine quoniam iratus es mihi : conversus est furor tuus, et consolatus es me. I shall confess to Thee, Lord, for Thou art angry with me : Thy fury is turned away and Thou dost comfort me.

To Thy praise I shall confess my sins, and I shall do that because Thou art angry with my sinning. And I may not please Thee unless I destroy my sin through confession, for so is Thy fury turned away ; that is, Thou hast turned endless pain into short penance, and by that Thou dost comfort me, delivering me from a biting conscience and pouring into my heart knowledge and feeling of Thy love.

Ecce deus salvator meus : fiducialiter agam et non timebo. Lo, God my Saviour : trustfully I shall work and I shall not fear.

All men, behold ! Lo, God, Jesus Christ, is my Saviour, cleansing me of sin and delivering me from torment. Now He saves me, turned to Him, whom He before blinded, turned to the world. Trustfully I shall work ; that is, I shall boldly say that He shall come to judge and render to every man after his death. And I shall not fear to say it, though I be despised by evil men for my truthfulness.

Quia fortitudo mea et laus mea dominus: et factus est mihi in salutem. For the Lord is my strength and my praise: and He is become my salvation.

My strength, of Whom I am stalwart that I fear not, because of myself I am very weak. And my praise, Whose praise I seek in will and word and work, not mine. And He is become my salvation against Adam, who brought me into the sickness of death.

And you that will follow the form of this conversation,

Haurietis aquas in gaudio de fontibus salvatoris; et dicetis in illa die: confitemini domino et invocate nomen ejus. You shall draw waters in joy from the wells of the Saviour; and you shall say in that day: "Confess to the Lord and invoke His Name!"

You shall draw, through charity and meekness, waters of devotion and of the wisdom of heaven, in joy rendering service to God. Of the wells; that is, of the plenteous gifts and grace of Jesus Christ. And you shall say to others in that day, that is, when you drink of those clear wells and leave the muddy waters of earthly lusts: "Confess your sins to the Lord! And so, invoke His Name and live so that your life shows forth His praise, which may not be unless you call His name into yourself, making yourself His dwelling place."

Notas facite in populis adinventiones ejus: mementote quoniam excelsum est nomen ejus. Make known amongst the folk His findings: remember that His name is most high.

Make known, that is, preach amongst the folk that they may know His incarnation, through which He established our salvation, and that He is found through charity and good works. And remember Him; that is, keep Him ever in mind, for His

Name Jesus is high above all names. Keep that in your thought and you shall not fall into pride, nor covet the name of God, as Lucifer and Adam did.

Cantate domino quoniam magnifice fecit: annuntiate hoc in universa terra. Sing to the Lord, for He did worshipfully: show that to all the earth.

Sing to the Lord in contemplation, for therein is delectable comfort, if it be contemplation rightly called; and working well therewith, honour Him. For worshipfully He did the salvation of men, dying to save sinful wretches. What thing is more worshipful than to render good for evil? Show that worshipful thing amongst all men, but especially,

Exulta et lauda habitatio sion: quia magnus in medio tui sanctus israel. Be glad and praise, thou dwelling of Sion: for great in the midst of thee is the Holy One of Israel.

Thou that dwellest in Sion, that is in Holy Church, and in the contemplation of God, and art made the dwelling of Jesus Christ, be glad. That is, show thyself well pleased in good works, and praise God that has done so to thee. For He is great in thee in love and virtue, He that is the holy One of Israel; that is, Christ sanctifying him that is truly Israel, in truth and charity seeing God.

The Song of Ezechias

(*Isaias xxxviii.*)

Ego dixi: in dimidio dierum meorum vadam ad portas inferi. I said: in the middle of my days I shall go to the gates of hell.

Ezechias the king, after his sickness and granting of life fifty years, praises God and says: I said in my heart, despairing of

life—for I had heard the voice of death from the prophet's mouth —in the midst of my days, that is, in imperfection of works, the days in which I should have lived not being fulfilled, I shall go to the gates of hell. That is, I, thus imperfect, dying shall pass to hell, for thither go all men before the coming of Jesus Christ. And therefore

Quæsivi residuum annorum meorum ; dixi : non videbo dominum deum in terra viventium. I sought the remainder of my years : I said I shall not see the Lord God in the land of the living.

I sought, praying to God that I might end the remainder of my years ; that is, that I might bring my life to perfection and fullness of days. For I said within myself, if I now die without child I shall not see God Man in heaven. As who should say, I may never come there ; for he knew that God had promised to David that the Son of God should be born of his generation, and that could not have been if Ezechias had died and left no seed above the earth. And I said :

Non aspiciam hominem ultra, et habitatorem quietis. I shall not see man beyond, and the inhabitant of rest.

I shall not see Him that is God and Man, born of my generation beyond ; that is, after I am dead. And I shall not see the inhabitant of rest ; that is, I shall not see the company of chosen men dwelling in endless rest, to dwell with whom were delectable rest. For behold

Generatio mea ablata est, et convoluta est a me, quasi tabernaculum pastorum. My generation is torn and gathered up from me, as the tents of shepherds.

My generation, that is, the succession of children, is as wholly removed from me as are the tents of shepherds, that are in a

short while folded up and removed, and are not seen. And therewith

Præcisa est velut a texente, vita mea : dum adhuc ordirer, succidit me. My life is cut off as by the weaver : whilst I yet begin he cuts me down.

My life is shorn away in youth before I come to age, as by the weaver, who cuts down that which is woven ere it be finished. And yet, whilst I begin to live, he cuts me down with the sickle of death, for we no sooner begin to live than we begin to die.

De mane usque ad vesperam finies me : sperabam usque ad mane ; quasi leo sic contrivit omnia ossa mea. From morn till even thou shalt make an end of me. I hoped till the morn ; as the lion, he broke all my bones.

He speaks as a man that lies in a severe fever, that from morning till evening awaits either the passing of the evil or death. I hoped till the morn, that is, all night, to be released, or to die. As a lion that spares nothing, so God or my sickness broke all my bones ; that is, wasted all my strength.

De mane usque ad vesperam finies me : sicut pullus hirundinis sic clamabo, meditabor ut columba. From morn till even thou shalt make an end of me : as a young swallow so shall I cry. I shall meditate as the dove.

Thou shalt end me ; I await my end from morning to evening. As he often writes the same words, he shows the extent of his evil and burden, as is the manner of sick men ; when they feel right hard, they know not what they may say. As the young of the swallow that greedily asks for meat, so shall I cry to God, my leech, that I may find His medicine. And I shall think as the dove ; that is, meekly, without the gall of ire and wickedness,

having sorrow for my sin, not the song of vanity. And in this cry and meditation

Attenuati sunt oculi mei : suspicientes in excelsum. Thinned are mine eyes : looking up on high.

Mine eyes are thinned ; that is, my thought and mine intent are purged of vile lusts and foul desires and of vain thoughts, and made subtile and seemly in the love of Jesus Christ. And so they look up on high, to the joy of heaven, not downcast in the love of this world.

Domine vim patior, responde pro me : quid dicam, aut quid respondebit mihi, cum ipse fecerit ? Lord, I suffer violence, answer for me : what shall I say or what shall He answer when He has done ?

Lord, I suffer violence ; that is, oppression of sickness beyond my power, therefore answer for me ; that is, be surety for my amending. For I will amend that wherein I have erred. For it is a great peril to be found lying where God is surety. But what shall I say to God when I suffer this pain justly, or what shall God answer me when He has done to me what is just ? For He is the avenger of my sin, Who is the Maker of my nature. As who should say, the best is in all anguish to take what God sends patiently and pray mercy of Him, Who did according to His will. And therewith

Recogitabo tibi omnes annos meos in amaritudine animæ meæ. I shall think upon Thee all my years : in the bitterness of my soul.

I shall think upon Thee ; that is, for the praising of Thee I shall bring to my mind all my years, that is, all my life that is

passed, in which I feel culpable ; and in the bitterness of my soul ; that is, that the bitterness of sorrow shall be in my soul for my sins.

Domine si sic vivitur, et in talibus vita spiritus mei, corripies me, et vivificabis me : ecce in pace amaritudo mea amarissima. Lord, if man so lives, and in such things is the life of my spirit, Thou shalt chastise me and Thou shalt quicken me : lo, in peace is my bitterness most bitter.

" Lord, if man so lives," as who should say, it is a general rule that man so lives, that is, through true penance. " And in such," that is, in hatred of sin and in love of righteousness, " is the life of my spirit," else it is dead. Therefore Thou shalt chastise me here, as Thou dost Thy sons, that I perish not with the sons of this world for ever. And chastising Thou shalt quicken me, that is, Thou shalt give me perfect health. For, lo, in peace, namely, in true patience, is my bitterness ; that is, my sickness and tribulation, which Thou dost send me, is suffered patiently and in peace without grumbling, though it be seen to be most bitter whilst other men are in health.

Tu autem eruisti animam meam ut non periret, projecisti post tergum tuum omnia peccata mea. But Thou didst deliver my soul that it might not perish : Thou didst cast behind Thy back all my sins.

Thou didst ordain me for Thy love, and to Thy praise Thou didst deliver my soul from the death of sin, that it might not perish with the souls of wicked men, whom Thou dost deliver neither from sin nor from hell. Thou hast cast behind Thy back, that is, Thou didst give to oblivion, all my sins, that Thou

seest them not to punish. For whomsoever Thou hast punished sufficiently here Thou wilt not punish hereafter.

Quia non infernus confitebitur tibi, neque mors laudabit te: non expectabunt qui descendunt in lacum, veritatem tuam. For hell shall not confess to Thee, nor death praise Thee: and they that descend into the lake shall not expect Thy truth.

Hell, that is, he who is set in the foul ground of sins, shall not confess to Thee, for the devil binds his heart and his mouth; nor the dead, that is, he who is dead in despair, shall not praise Thee, for no fair praise is in the mouth of the sinful man. And they that descend into the lake of damnation shall not expect Thy truth; that is, they have no hope of being delivered through Jesus Christ, Redeemer of mankind, but

Vivens vivens ipse confitebitur tibi, sicut et ego hodie: pater filiis notam faciet veritatem tuam. The living, living, shall confess to Thee as I this day: the father shall make known Thy truth to his sons.

The living in body and living in grace shall confess to Thee, praising as I this day, that is, at this present time, praise Thee. For every good father, bodily or ghostly, living in the fear of God, shall make known Thy truth to his sons, that is, the truth of faith and the love of a Christian man's religion.

Domine salvum me fac, et psalmos nostros cantabimus cunctis diebus vitæ nostræ in domo domini. Lord, make me safe, and we shall sing our psalms all the days of our life in the house of Our Lord.

Make me safe from devils and from all evils within and without and we shall sing our psalms; that is, we shall solemnize Thy praises with mouth and hand all the days of our life, that is

continually, whilst we are in ghostly life and in charity in God's house, namely, in Holy Church. Dwelling outside it the psalms are not pleasing to Jesus Christ.

The Song of Anna

(1 *Samuel ii.*)

Exultavit cor meum in domino: et exaltatum est cornu meum in deo meo. My heart is gladdened in the Lord: and my horn is exalted in my God.

Elcana, who was the father of Samuel, had two wives, Phenenna and Anna. By Phenenna, who first bore children, is betokened the synagogue of Jews; by Anna, who was at first barren and afterwards began to be more fruitful than the other, is betokened the Church of Christian men. Wherefore Anna burst forth in praise of God and made this psalm, composing it; whereby the Holy Ghost stirs us to the praise of Our Lord, who has taken us from the errors of heathen men. At the beginning of her song she shows that the higher delight is in God, and says, representing us: "My heart was gladdened in my Lord, for the fruit of good works and deserving meditation, Who had pity on my barrenness. And my horn, that is my ghostly strength by which I put away those who scorn me, is raised in my God, not in myself nor in the vanity of the world."

Dilatatum est os meum super inimicos meos quia lætata sum in salutari meo. My mouth is opened above my enemies; for I have rejoiced in Thy salvation.

Wilfully and with gladness I opened my mouth in the praise of God, above my foes, that is, more than those that shamed and despised me before. And that because I rejoiced not in pomp

and vainglory, but in salvation, that is, in Jesus, Who has exalted me in virtue.

Non sanctus ut est dominus, neque enim est alius extra te : et non est fortis sicut deus noster. None is holy as the Lord, nor any besides Him ; and none is as stalwart as our God.

None is holy, that is, free from sin, as is the Lord Jesus Christ, for there is no other that is holy besides Him. For in Him and through Him is every man holy, and none is as stalwart to avenge evil deeds as our God is, Who serves evil men according to their evil will. Therefore, ye scorners and despisers of poor men and honourers of rich men,

Nolite multiplicare loqui sublimia, gloriantes. Be unwilling to multiply to speak high things, rejoicing.

Be unwilling any more to give your tongue leave to speak proudly. Because you are exalted in the might of this world, for that might is but sorrow and shame to you. If you are proud, rejoicing in riches and in your delights and lecheries, remember well you shall have more sorrow than joy. For you get no other heaven, unless you spend your riches according to God's will.

Recedant vetera de ore vestro : quia deus scientiarum dominus est et ipsi præparantur cogitationes. Let old things depart from your mouth ; for God is the Lord of knowledge, and thy thoughts are made ready for Him.

Old things are lies, false oaths, curses, backbitings, which show that you continue in your old life. But let them depart from your mouth, that you use them no more. Take new speech in new life, for the God of knowledge, who knows all things and can do all things, is the Lord, strictly judging your old errors. And for Him thoughts are laid bare, for He knows well what you

think and wherein your delight is greatest. Five things are found in man : thought, affection, purpose, work and speech. Let the thought be holy, the affection clean, the purpose right, the work just, the speech tempered.

Arcus fortium superatus est : et infirmi accincti sunt robore. The bow of the stalwart is overcome, the sick are belted with strength.

The bow of the stalwart is the hope of rich and covetous men, that they bend to win the honour and lordship of this world. And that is overcome, for Christ shall break it and cast it into the fire of hell. And sick men, that is, meek and feeble men without presumption and pride in their own eyes, are belted in strength. That is, through ghostly virtue they are made stable and enduring in thought, to fight against their enemies, for all good men have many foes whilst they are in this life.

Repleti prius pro panibus se locaverunt : et famelici saturati sunt. They that were filled first hired themselves out for loaves, and the hungry were filled.

They that first were filled with earthly lusts and swollen in pride, for loaves, that is, the food of the soul, they hired themselves. That is, they gave themselves up meekly to receive the love of heaven. And so the hungry, that is, those desiring righteousness and the word of life, are filled with the sweetness of eternal joy, so long as this ghostly bread shall last.

Donec sterilis peperit plurimos : et quæ multos habebat filios infirmata est. Many are born to be barren, and she that had many sons is made sick.

To the barren, that is, to the Church of Christian men, that first was barren of truth and good works, which has

borne many ghostly sons to Christ ; and the synagogue that had many fleshly sons, is made sick. That is, it is known that it brought no man to perfection and now it brings no man to salvation.

Dominus mortificat et vivificat : deducit ad inferos et reducit. The Lord slays and He quickens ; He leads to hell and brings back again.

Our Lord slays them that love this life outrageously, and he quickens them that forsake this world and despise this life for life eternal. He leads to hell, that is, He puts the fear of hell into sinful men, and so He brings them back again to the hope of life.

Dominus pauperem facit et ditat : humiliat et sublevat. The Lord makes poor and He makes rich : He humbles and He lifts up.

Our Lord makes a poor man, mercifully robbing his heart of covetousness and earthly love, and He makes him rich with everlasting gifts. For He did not make him rich through righteousness unless He first had made him poor through mercy. He humbles the proud to the punishment of the devils and lifts up the meek to the joy of angels.

Suscitans de pulvere egenum, et de stercore erigens pauperem. Raising the needy out of the dust : and out of the fen uplifting the poor.

Raising the needy within through grace out of the dust, that is, from evil life which is blown about with the wind of temptation ; that is, him that knows his ghostly need and therefore is always asking God, that he be not dust. And out of the fen, that

is, out of the corruption of the body, uplifting the poor man, that is, the despiser of this world and holy lover of Christ.

Ut sedeat cum principibus, et solium gloriæ teneat. That he sit with princes, and hold the throne of joy.

That is, that he be in merit and rest with the apostles, and in the Day of Doom hold the throne and the power of judgment.

Domini enim sunt cardines terræ, et posuit super eos orbem. For the Lord's are the hinges of the earth, and He set the world upon them.

The hinges of the earth are the perfect men of Holy Church in truth and charity, through whom others are brought to stability and endurance. And He set the world upon them; that is, He made them the foundation of His Church as wide as it is throughout the world.

Pedes sanctorum suorum servabit, et impii in tenebris conticescent: quia non in fortitudine sua roborabitur vir. He shall keep the feet of His saints, and the wicked in darkness shall hold their peace, for not in his stalwartness shall man be strengthened.

The feet, that is, the good affections and the devout yearnings of his saints, that is, of those whom He hallows and makes pure, He shall keep from falling, for on those feet they go to God. And wicked men, without pity for their own souls, in the darkness of ignorance and evil deeds, shall grow dumb, so that they do not praise God nor confess their sins truthfully. For not in his stalwartness is a man strengthened; that is, holy men have no presumption of their own virtue and of strength, as proud men have whose strength is the cause of their damnation.

Dominum formidabunt adversarii ejus, et super illos in cælis tonabit. The adversaries of Our Lord shall fear Him; and He shall thunder above them in the heavens.

God's enemies are all those that act against justice or who love falsehood. And if they will not fear Him now, at the last day they shall fear Him, when He begins to judge, and thunders horribly above them, saying to them: "Go, ye cursed, into fire without end, which is prepared for the devil and for his angels."

Dominus judicabit fines terræ et dabit imperium regi suo, et sublimabit cornu Christi sui. The Lord shall judge the ends of the earth and He shall give empire to His King: and He shall raise the horn of His Christ.

The Lord shall judge the ends of the earth, not the beginning, nor the middle, for every man shall be judged by God as he is found at the ending of his life. And then He shall give empire; that is, all chosen men that lived in His Commandments, to His King, that is, to His Son the King. And He shall raise the horn of His Christ, through which He blew away all the might of His enemy.

The Song of Moses (1)

(*Exodus xv.*)

Cantemus domino: gloriose enim magnificatus est, equum et ascensorem dejecit in mare. Let us sing to Our Lord, for gloriously He is worshipped: the horse and the rider he cast down into the sea.

We that are led out of Egypt, that is, out of the darkness of vices and out of the affliction of earthly cares, let us sing to the Lord, that is, praise Him, thanking Him with all the devotion

of our hearts. For He is gloriously worshipped in such deliverance whereby death is destroyed in glorious victory. The horse, that is, all damnable wretches who now bear themselves very proudly, and the rider, that is, the devil whom all evil men bear, He cast down into the sea, namely, into the pit of hell. This shall be fulfilled in the Day of Doom. Therefore let us who are delivered sing to God and say :

Fortitudo mea, et laus mea dominus, et factus est mihi in salutem. The Lord is my strength and my praise, and He is become my salvation.

Through Him we are made stalwart to stand. Through Him we shall be praised when our enemies that now are praised shall be despised. And He is become our eternal salvation. Their rider is become their damnation.

Iste deus meus, et glorificabo eum : deus patris mei, et exaltabo eum. He is my God and I shall glorify Him : the God of my father, and I shall exalt Him.

He Himself, Jesus Christ, giver of grace, is my God, and therefore I shall glorify Him ; that is, I shall seek His joy and praise, not mine. He is the God of my father, of patriarchs and apostles, and I shall exalt Him, that His Name may be honoured through me.

Dominus quasi vir pugnator, omnipotens nomen ejus : currus pharaonis et exercitum ejus projecit in mare. The Lord is as a fighting man, almighty is His name : the chariots of Pharaoh and his host He cast into the sea.

Our Lord is a fighter, for He drives out the devil from the hearts of His servants. Almighty is His name, for nothing may stand against Him ; and that is well seen, for the chariots of Pharaoh, that is, the boast and the pride of the devil and

his host, namely, all unrighteous men that serve the devil as his true knights—because they would rather die in pride than live in meekness—these he cast into the sea of endless bitterness.

Electi principes ejus submersi sunt in mari rubro: abyssi operuerunt eos, descenderunt in profundum quasi lapis. His chosen princes are drowned in the Red Sea; the depths held them, they descended into the deep like a stone.

The chosen princes of Satan are the glorious men of this world, that set all their love and their pleasure in earthly wealth; and they shall be drowned in the Red Sea of endless fire because they are here drowned in the black sea of sin. The depths of hell shall cover them, that they may see no more of their vanity. They descend into the abyss of torments, as a stone that is cast to the deep never comes back again.

Dextera tua, domine, magnificata est in fortitudine: dextera tua, domine, percussit inimicum: et in multitudine gloriæ tuæ deposuisti adversarios meos.[1] *Thy right hand, Lord, is worshipped in strength; Thy right hand smote the enemy: and in the greatness of Thy glory Thou hast done down mine adversaries.*[1]

That is, Lord, Thy Son showed strength against the devil and bereft him of his might; and for the praise of Thy great glory, Thou didst put down evil spirits and vices from their old settle, that they might have no power in my soul.

Misisti iram tuam, quæ devoravit eos sicut stipulam: in spiritu furoris tui congregatæ sunt aquæ. Thou didst send Thy wrath, which ate them as stubble: in the spirit of Thy fury the waters are gathered together.

[1] The Vulgate has "adversarios tuos" and the Revised Version "them that rise up against thee."

Thou didst send Thy wrath ; that is, Thou hadst vengeance on them, which ate them as fire does the stubble ; hard vengeance is fire. In the spirit of Thy fury, that is, in Thy spirit made wrath, the waters of all torment are gathered for sinful men.

Stetit unda fluens, congregatæ sunt abyssi in medio mari. The running water stood : gathered are the depths in the middle of the sea.

The running water stood ; that is, the pain of the damned endures. Gathered are the depths of all sorrows in the midst of the sea ; that is, in the foulest pit of hell, that they may be punished there who are here deep in malice and wickedness. But first,

Dixit inimicus : persequar et comprehendam, dividam spolia ; implebitur anima mea. The enemy said : I shall follow and I shall take, and I shall part the spoils ; my soul shall be satisfied.

The enemy, the devil, said : I shall follow Christian men with evil egging-on who turn out of Egypt and hasten to the land of heaven ; and I shall take them with snares of many temptations and manifold errors and falsehoods. I shall part the spoils ; that is, when they are withdrawn from cleanness and charity I shall put them into various vices and cruelties, and so my will shall be fulfilled in them. For the devil covets nothing more than man's destruction. And if any stand against me,

Evaginabo gladium meum, interficiet eos manus mea. I shall draw out my sword : and my hand shall slay them.

I shall draw out ; that is, openly I shall show before their eyes my sword, namely, venomous pleasures and deadly sins ;

and through those my might shall slay them spiritually. He slays many, but not all ; and all his malice shall be in vain.

Flavit spiritus tuus et operuit eos mare : submersi sunt quasi plumbum in aquis vehementibus. Thy spirit blew and the sea covered them : they are drowned as lead in the great waters.

Thy spirit blew, that is, the surpassing vengeance of Thy will fell upon them, and then the sea covered them ; that is, the devil, with all whom he has deceived, shall be swallowed up in hell, that they may not injure righteous men. Drowned they are, heavy as lead, because of the burden of sins, in great waters ; that is, in great torments that may never depart.

Quis similis tui in fortibus, domine? quis similis tui, magnificus in sanctitate, terribilis atque laudabilis et faciens mirabilia? Who is Thy like in stalwartness, Lord? who is Thy like, magnificent in holiness, awful and laudable, and doing wonders?

Worshipful He is in largesse of gifts and the making of holy men, awful in vengeance on evil men, and praiseworthy in the delivering of righteous men, and in doing wonders in raising the meek and casting down the proud.

Extendisti manum tuam : et devoravit eos terra. Thou didst stretch forth Thy hand : and the earth devoured them. Dux fuisti in misericordia tua populo quem redemisti. In Thy mercy Thou wast a leader : to the folk whom Thou didst redeem.

That is, Thou didst show Thy might, and earthly desires did at first eat them up ; afterwards hell devours them. But in Thy

mercy Thou dost lead to heaven the folk whom Thou hast brought out of sin.

Et portasti eum in fortitudine tua, ad habitaculum sanctum tuum. And Thou didst bear them in Thy strength to Thy holy dwelling.

That is, in Thy virtue and in Thy goodness Thou didst bear them from the malice and cares of this world to Thy dwelling in everlasting joy.

Tunc ascenderunt populi et irati sunt: dolores obtinuerunt habitatores philisthiim. Then the folk rose up and they were wrath: sorrows possessed the dwellers of Philistine.

When good men despise this life and hasten to heaven, then the fiends and evil men come upon them to hinder them, and they are wrath because they cannot overcome them. But after that the sorrows of endless death possess the dwellers of Philistine; that is, those falling through drink, because they are drunk with earthly lust.

Tunc conturbati sunt principes edom, robustos moab obtinuit tremor: obriguerunt omnes habitatores chanaan. Then the princes of Edom were troubled, trembling possessed the stalwarts of Moab: all the dwellers of Canaan grew stark.

The princes of Edom are earthly kings, who thirst for the blood of men; they shall be troubled when Christ judges, but now they are held glorious. The stalwarts of Moab are all the proud men of the world; they shall tremble for their damnation, that may not be appealed against. The dwellers of Canaan are changeable men and unstable in good purpose, and cannot keep themselves in truth or in charity; and they shall

grow stark for fear and woe, so that they can find succour on no side.

Irruat super eos formido et pavor, in magnitudine brachii tui. Let fear and quaking fall on them, in the greatness of Thine arm.

That is, make them so afraid of Thee that they have no power to disturb Thy servants in their way.

Fiant immobiles quasi lapis, donec pertranseat populus tuus, domine ; donec pertranseat populus tuus iste, quem possedisti. Let them be made immovable as a stone until Thy people pass, Lord ; until Thy people pass, whom Thou didst possess.

That is, let evil men be held in the hardness of their obstinacy, until the folk whom Thou hast chosen have passed from this life.

Introduces eos, et plantabis in monte hereditatis tuæ, firmissimo habitaculo tuo quod operatus es domine. Thou shalt lead them and Thou shalt set them on the hill of Thine heritage, and in the most firm dwelling which Thou hast wrought, O Lord.

That is, Thou shalt lead them into the land of the living and set them in high heaven, that is, the firm dwelling, without harm or envy, which Thou hast wrought for them, that they may be in endless rest. And that is

Sanctuarium tuum, domine, quod firmaverunt manus tuæ ; dominus regnabit in æternum et ultra. Thy sanctuary, Lord, which Thy hand made firm ; the Lord shall reign for ever and beyond.

In that sanctuary Our Lord shall be King, that is, in all saved men, for ever and beyond, He says. For He is before all things and beyond all things ; before all as Maker, before all that is

made ; beyond all, for he surpasses all and they are of Him ; and without Him, they may not be.

Ingressus est enim eques pharao cum curribus et equitibus ejus in mare : et reduxit super eos dominus aquas maris. For Pharaoh on horseback, with chariots and horsemen, entered the sea ; and Our Lord brought upon him the waters of the sea.

That is, the devil, sitting in evil men, is entered into this world, with all his creatures, to tempt good men and to make them angry. But Our Lord brings upon him and his all the pains of hell.

Filii autem israel ambulaverunt per siccum in medio ejus. But the sons of Israel walked on dry land in the midst of it.

That is, true Christian men, following Christ, pass through the world to heaven by the dry way of chastity and charity without the water of fleshly lust.

The Prayer of Habacuc

Domine audivi auditionem tuam, et timui. Lord, I heard Thy message, and I feared.

That is, Lord, through the secret of Thine incarnation, I knew and I feared ; because I held myself unworthy of such a message.

Domine hoc opus tuum, in medio annorum vivifica illud. Lord, this is Thy work, in the midst of years quicken it.

Lord, this nativity of the maiden is Thy work, not the work of mankind. In the midst of years, namely, in the fullness of time, quicken it, that is, send Thy son to quicken us.

In medio annorum notum facies : cum iratus fueris misericordiæ recordaberis. In the midst of years Thou shalt make known : when Thou art angry Thou shalt bethink Thee of mercy.

In the last age that now is, which is called the midst of years, for it is in the fullness of the time of grace, in which Christ is made known to all that will come to Him. For now is the time in which He has bethought Him to do mercy.

Deus ab austro veniet : et sanctus de monte pharan. God shall come from the south : and the Holy One from the hill of Pharan.

That is, God shall come in truth and love of Him, through the fire of the Holy Ghost and the knowledge of His law.

Operuit cælos gloria ejus : et laudis ejus plena est terra. His joy covered the heavens : and the earth is full of His praise.

That is, truth and love, through which He is glorified, covered apostles and holy men as an honourable clothing ; and so He is praised throughout Holy Church.

Splendor ejus ut lux erit : cornua in manibus ejus. The splendour of Him shall be as light : horns are in His hands.

That is, the true knowledge of Him makes all men bright and shining that love Him. For horns are in His hands ; that is, His hands were stretched and nailed on two corners of the Cross.

Ibi abscondita est fortitudo ejus : ante faciem ejus ibit mors. There is hidden His strength : death shall go before His face.

There, in the meekness of the Cross, was hidden in manhood the strength of His Godhead. And there death would have fled His presence, but it might not ; for He dying overtook it and slew it as He says in Osee : " Death, I shall be thy death, and

hell, I shall be thy biting." He that bites a thing takes a part thereof in his mouth, another part he leaves without. So Christ did with hell. All the good men He took with Him and all the evil He left there.

Egredietur diabolus ante pedes ejus : stetit et mensus est terram. The devil shall go out before His feet : He stood and He measured the earth.

For at the coming of Jesus Christ the devil went out of many bodies and souls. And then Christ stood and measured the earth ; that is, He took the chosen men for His own and gave them grace and joy after the measure of His giving.

Aspexit et dissolvit gentes : et contriti sunt montes sæculi. He beheld and He loosed the nations : and altogether broken are the high hills of the world.

He beheld with the eye of mercy, and He loosed the nations from the bonds of sin. And then the high hills, that is, the proudest men, that swelled with earthly precedence, are altogether broken ; that is, they are made very humble.

Incurvati sunt colles mundi, ab itineribus æternitatis ejus. Straightened are the hills of the world, from the ways of His eternity.

That is, the less proud men bent themselves to be obedient to God's commandments. And from that they knew His ways, by which He called them to endless joy.

Pro iniquitate vidi tentoria æthiopiæ : turbabuntur pelles terræ madian. For wickedness I saw the tents of Ethiopia : the coverings of the land of Madian shall be disturbed.

The tents of Ethiopia are all that serve the devil, black and vile in sin. The coverings of Madian are all that fear not the

just doom of God, and all these the prophet says shall be troubled in pain and torment for their wickedness. But

Numquid in fluminibus iratus es domine: aut in fluminibus furor tuus, vel in mari indignatio tua. Whether in floods Thou art made wrath, Lord, or in floods is Thy fury, or in the sea Thy indignation.

That is, whether Thou wilt suffer all men to perish and all this world to fall in vengeance. As who should say, no. For Thou art He

Qui ascendes super equos tuos: et quadrigæ tuæ salvatio. That ridest on Thy horses, and the salvation of Thy chariot.

That is, Thou sittest upon Apostles and upon Thy holy bearers through the world to make war upon the devil. And Thy chariots, that is, the evangelists, are the salvation of men who are saved through the gospel.

Suscitans suscitabis arcum tuum, juramenta tribubus quæ locutus es. Raising Thou shalt raise Thy bow: the oaths which Thou spakest to the tribes.

That is, Thou shalt raise Holy Writ that lay sleeping whilst men understood it not. And so Thou shalt fulfil the oaths which Thou didst make to the tribes of Israel.

Fluvios scindes terræ, viderunt et doluerunt montes: gurges aquarum transiit. The streams Thou shalt cut to the earth,[1] *the hills saw and sorrowed; the dam of the waters passed.*

These streams are the fathers of holy counsel, whom Christ scatters to various places that men may receive moisture for their dry hearts. That the hills saw, those are proud men who are raised above others by riches. And they sorrowed for their

[1] More correctly, "Thou shalt part the streams of the earth."

sin. The dam of the waters, that is, the ghostly abundance of spiritual counsel, passed from man to man. And then

Dedit abyssus vocem suam : altitudo manus suas levavit. Depth gave His voice, height lifted up His hands.

That is, they that were in the depth of evils gave voice of contradiction to the truth. And the pride of the world raised up power to destroy Christian men. Nevertheless

Sol et luna steterunt in habitaculo suo : in luce sagittarum tuarum ibunt, in splendore fulgurantis hastæ tuæ. The Sun and the Moon stood in their dwelling : in the light of Thine arrows they shall go, in the splendour of Thy flashing spear.

The Sun—Christ, the Moon—the unity of Holy Church, shall endure in righteous men. For they shall go in the light of Thine arrows, that is, of Thy words, piercing their hearts. And in the splendour of Thy miracles, which made them afraid like lightning, and wounded their hearts.

In fremitu conculcabis terram : in furore obstupefacies gentes. In gnashing Thou shalt tread the earth : in fury Thou shalt stupefy the nations.

In gnashing, that is, in the dread of Doom, Thou shalt humble the hearts of earthly men. And in fury, that is, in menace of eternal fire, Thou shalt make them as stupefied men, because of the woe that is coming to them.

Egressus es in salutem populi tui : in salutem cum Christo tuo. Thou art gone forth to the salvation of Thy folk, to salvation with Thy Christ.

That is, Thou didst show Thyself through preachers for the salvation of Christian men, dwelling in salvation with Thy Christ, Jesus Our Lord.

Percussisti caput de domo impii: denudasti fundamentum ejus usque ad collum. Thou hast smitten the head from the house of the wicked: Thou hast laid bare his foundation, even to the neck.

The devil, that is, head and king of all the sons of Pride, Thou didst smite out of the heart of the wicked man, and so Thou didst make him good. And Thou didst make him naked even to the neck; that is, Thou didst bereft him of all the wrapping that he had of Thy chosen men. So that he remains nothing but the head of evil men.

Maledixisti sceptris ejus, capiti bellatorem ejus: venientibus ut turbo ad dispergendum me. Thou didst curse his sceptres, the head of his fighters; coming as a whirlwind to scatter me.

The sceptre is the king's wand, that betokens his post. As who should say, O God, Thou didst damn all wicked men in whom the devil has power for sin. And also Thou cursed the head of his fighters; that is, evil princes and fiends, who come with many temptations to scatter me as dust before the wind. But

Exultatio eorum: sicut ejus qui devorat pauperem in abscondito. The gladness of them was as that of him who devours the poor in hiding.

That is, all their joy is brought to nothing, as that of him who despoils a poor man whom he thought was rich and is not, and is so deceived.

Viam fecisti in mari equis tuis: in luto aquarum multarum. Thou didst make a way in the sea for Thy horses, and in the mud of many waters.

That is, in simple men Thou hast made a way for Thy preachers, so that Thy word runs in their thoughts. And Thou hast made a

way for them through the mud of many waters, that is, through vile and grasping covetousness of men, turning them perfectly to Thyself, so that no desire for any creature is left in their hearts.

Audivi et conturbatus est venter meus : a voce contremuerunt labia mea. I have heard and my breast was troubled ; my lips trembled at the voice.

I heard, that is, I understood through the Holy Ghost, what anguish good men shall suffer at the end of this world, and my breast, that is, my frailty, was stirred by fear. At the voice of that hearing my lips trembled ; that is, I quaked for fear of the sin of my mouth, defiled in speech, and dwelling among folk that have foul lips. As much as to say, I fear to tell holy words with my defiled mouth. Therefore

Ingrediatur putredo in ossibus meis : et subter me scateat. May rotting proceed in my bones and spring under me.

That is, may my flesh rot to my bones and, rotting full of worms, spring under me. May this befall me here that I may avoid worse. And

Ut requiescam in die tribulationis : et ascendam ad populum accinctum nostrum. That I may rest in the day of tribulation, and that I may rise to our belted folk.

That I may rest with saints on the day of greatest anguish, that is, on the Day of Doom. And then rise to the company of belted folk, that is, those who fought stalwartly against all evil inclinations for the love of God. He, this prophet, who desires to rot above the earth, lest he suffer pain in the next world, does not assent to the love of any creature.

Ficus enim non florebit : et non erit germen in vineis. For the fig shall not flourish : and the bud shall not be on the vines.

That is, the great part of Christian men that seemed to be in sweet devotion shall show no flower of virtue. And the root of charity, that was wont to make men spiritually drunk for joy, in them shall be dry.

Mentietur opus olivæ : et arva non afferent cibum. The work of the olive shall deceive and the fields shall not bring forth meat.

That is, some kings and priests shall fail in mercy and good works, and so they deceive, because they do not as they promise to God. And the fields, that is, their subjects, shall not give spiritual fruit to please God.

Abscindetur de ovili pecus et non erit armentum in præsepibus. The beast of the fold shall be smitten away and the herd shall not be in the stalls.

The beast, that is, every evil Christian man living as a beast, shall be smitten away as a dead limb out of the fold of Holy Church. And the herd, that is, the spiritual workers, shall not be in the stalls, that is, in the states of righteous life. For nearly all good men, because of many evils, shall fall into errors.

Ego autem in domino gaudebo et exultabo in deo Jesu meo. But I shall rejoice in the Lord, and I shall be glad in God my Jesus.

This is the saying of chosen men who endure firmly in the love of God. As who should say : they have their joy on earth and perish therewith, but I shall rejoice in my Lord through the sweetness of His love, and I shall be glad in God my Jesus, that is, my Saviour, not in the world, my loser. For

Deus dominus fortitudo mea et ponet pedes meos quasi cervorum. God, the Lord, is my strength and He shall set my feet as the harts'.

Evil men's feet are set as those of weak asses, that are fixed in the middle of the mire. So their affections are entangled with some love that draws them from the love of God. But holy men's affections are as the feet of the harts, that leap over all barriers, and they cast all corruption out of their hearts. Else they might never love Christ truly.

Et super excelsa mea deducet me victor in psalmis canentem. And above my height the victor shall lead me, singing in psalms.

Christ, Who is the victor of death and of the devil, shall lead me singing to His praise in psalms, that is, in good works and in ghostly devotion. Above my height, that is, above all bodily things that seem high to men, He shall lead me into contemplation of God.

The Song of Moses (2)

(*Deut. xxxii.*)

Audite cæli quæ loquar, audiat terra verba oris mei. Heavens, hear what I shall speak; let the earth hear the words of my mouth.

That is, ye men that have your conversation in heaven and ye that are in active life understand what I shall say, for it falls for your salvation. As who should say, bear witness that I do not still regard the wickedness of my folk.

Concrescat in pluvia doctrina mea, fluat ut ros eloquium meum. Let my counsel grow in rain, let my word run as dew.

That is, let my counsel make the hearers of it bear spiritual fruit, let it be multiplied in the rain of heaven. And let my word

run in men's hearts, as a dew of grace that may cool them from the heat of vices.

Quasi imber super herbam, et quasi stillæ super gramina ; quia nomen domini invocabo. As rain upon the herb and as drops upon the grass, for I shall call upon the name of the Lord.

Let my counsel be to you as rain on the grass, that it make green in you the buds of virtues. And it is meet that I be heard, for I shall call upon God, loving Him in my heart, not merely honouring Him with my lips, as do rich men. Therefore

Date magnificentiam deo nostro, quia dei perfecta sunt opera et omnes viæ ejus judicia. Give worship to our God, for the works of God are perfect and all His ways are judgments.

That is, all that He does He does with judgment, whether He takes us or He forsakes us.

Deus fidelis et absque ulla iniquitate, justus et rectus : peccaverunt ei et non filii ejus in sordibus. God is true and without any wickedness, just and right : they have sinned against him, and in filth they are not His sons.

God is true to His promise, and He injures no man, just in award and right in avenging. In the beginning our first parents sinned against Him and afterwards evil sons in filth of sin.

Generatio prava atque perversa hæccine reddis domino, populo stulte et insipiens ? O wicked and evil generation, behold thou dost render to the Lord, foolish and unwise folk.

Evil generation in thought and wicked in deed, behold thou dost render to God evil for good, and see to it, that knowest what wretchedness thou art in, thou foolish and unwise one that will not understand to what great torment thou goest.

Numquid non ipse est pater tuus, qui possedit te, et fecit, et creavit te? Is He not thy Father Who possessed thee, and made thee and wrought thee?

As who should say, thou shouldst love Him as thy Father, Who made thee man and ordained thee for His heritage, if thou wilt.

Memento dierum antiquorum, cogita generationes singulas. Remember the old days, think upon all generations.

How He delivered His folk from divers perils, and increased His servants among evil men, and did not lessen them.

Interroga patrem tuum, et annuntiabit tibi; majores tuos, et dicent tibi. Ask thy father and he shall explain it to thee, thy sovereigns, and they shall tell thee.

That is, what thou hast need to know, thy prelate and thy priest are obliged to advise thee.

Quando dividebat altissimus gentes: quando separabat filios adam. When the Most High parted the peoples, when He separated the sons of Adam.

This parting was when men began to dwell in all parts of the earth.

Constituit terminos populorum juxta numerum filiorum israel. He set the terms of His folk beside the number of the people of Israel.

That is, folk shall be dwelling in this world till the number of the sons of God be fulfilled; that is, till God has as many as He has ordained to be saved.

Pars autem domini, populus ejus: jacob funiculus hæreditatis ejus. But the portion of the Lord is His folk: Jacob is the cord of His heritage.

As who should say, many folk are in the world, but Jacob alone, that is, the wrestler against vices, is the mark of his

heritage. That is, His mark reaches no farther than in such; all others are out of bounds.

Invenit eum in terra deserta, in loco horroris, et vastæ solitudinis. He found him in a desert land, in a place of horror and in a waste wilderness.

That is, He found him that He had lost wandering in the wretchedness of this life, in which is horror because of the fear of woe, and a waste wilderness because of default of good works.

Circumduxit eum, et docuit: et custodivit quasi pupillam oculi sui. He led him about and advised him, and He kept him as the apple of His eye.

He led him about from the life of evil men, the nearest way to heaven. And He advised him in which degree or state he should love Him, and how. And He kept him as tenderly as the thing for which men are most tender.

Sicut aquila provocans ad volandum pullos suos, et super eos volitans. As an eagle calling its young to fly, and flying above them. Expandit alas suas, et assumpit eos, atque portavit in humeris suis. He spread His wings and He took them up, and bore them on His shoulders.

The eagle calling its young to the sight of the sun, when it sees that they grow weary with flying, holds them up with its wings. So Jesus Christ spreads out two wings of charity and takes us into virtue and bears us by His strength to heaven, that we may see the sun that shall never set.

Dominus solus dux ejus fuit: et non erat cum eo deus alienus. The Lord alone was his leader and no other god was with him.

In help and in protection from evil.

Constituit eum super excelsam terram: ut comederet fructus agrorum. He set him upon high land that he might eat the fruits of the fields.

That is, He set him in Holy Church to be delighted in abundance of spiritual fruit.

Ut sugeret mel de petra oleumque de saxo durissimo. That he might suck honey from the stone and oil from the hardest rock.

Honey from the stone is the counsel of Jesus Christ. The oil from the hardest rock is the unction of the Holy Ghost, sent from Christ glorified, whereby he is made so hard that he may never suffer pain.

Butyrum de armento, et lac de ovibus cum adipe agnorum et arietum filiorum Basan. Butter of the heifer and milk of sheep, with the fat of lambs and of the wethers of the sons of Basan.

Butter of the heifer is the stable counsel of the homilies of the patriarchs. Milk of sheep is counsel that pertains to them that begin to do well; the fat of lambs and of wethers is the burning desire that disciples and masters have for heaven; the sons of Basan are the lovers of this world, who often have lordship over good men here.

Et hircos cum medulla tritici, et sanguinem uvæ biberent meracissimum. And goats with the marrow of wheat and that they may drink the purest blood of the grape.

Goats are they that instruct us through the example of penance. We ought to have delight in them. With the marrow of wheat, that is, with the body of Christ, for He is the grape Whose blood Christian men receive.

Incrassatus est dilectus et recalcitravit : incrassatus, impinguatus, dilatatus. Full-bodied is the beloved and he has disobeyed, full-bodied, fattened, enlarged.

That is, the folk whom God loved, giving them plenty of gifts, disobeyed God, despising His commandments. And they multiplied in riches.

Dereliquit dominum factorem suum, et recessit a deo salutari meo. He forsook God, his Maker ; and he departed from God, his Salvation.

For ease and wealth often draw men to sin, and make them forget God and turn to the devil.

Provocaverunt eum in diis alienis et in abominationibus ad iracundiam concitaverunt. They provoked Him with other gods, and in their loathsomeness they roused Him to wrath.

Every creature makes that thing his god which he loves most in his heart. Their loathsomeness is gluttony and lechery, which God hates.

Immolaverunt dæmoniis, et non deo, diis quos ignorabant. They sacrificed to devils and not to God ; to gods whom they knew not.

That is, they pleased not God in their lives, but devils of whom they never had any good.

Novi recentesque venerunt quos non coluerunt patres eorum. New and fresh gods came, whom their fathers honoured not.

That is, various errors entered among them, newly brought up through the enticing of the devil, which Christian men who preceded them did not practise.

Deum qui te genuit dereliquisti, et oblitus es domini creatoris tui. God Who begat thee thou didst forsake, and thou hast forgotten the Lord thy Maker.

Of God we are born spiritually. All forsake Him who assent to any deadly sin, and they also forget Him whilst their thoughts are bound up in the love of any creature.

Vidit dominus et ad iracundiam concitatus est : quia provocaverunt eam filii sui et filiæ. The Lord saw and was moved to wrath, for his sons and daughters provoked Him.

God, Who knows all things, sees the wickedness of men and therefore He is stirred to vengeance.

Et ait : abscondam faciem meam ab eis, et considerabo novissima eorum. And He said : " I shall hide My face from them ; and I shall consider the last of them."

Nothing is more painful than to lack the sight of God and His good will. And He considers what woe shall befall them in their ending who are here in great ease.

Generatio enim perversa est, et infideles filii. For it is a wicked generation and they are untrue sons.

For they kept not the troth with God that they promised in baptism.

Ipsi me provocaverunt in eo qui non erat deus et irritaverunt in vanitatibus suis. They provoked me with him that was not God, and disturbed me with their vanities.

That is, they made me wrath, loving the thing as god that was not God, and having more delight in their vanities than in my service ; for all that they love is but vanity.

Et ego provocabo eos in eo qui non est populus, et in gente stulta irritabo illos. And I shall provoke them with him that is not of the people, and with a foolish nation I shall irritate them.

Lo, the vengeance ! God brings them that are proud and contemptuous so low that they are not worthy to be compared with them that seemed fools and were held as nothing. And in that manner they are stirred to envy and hatred.

Ignis succensus est in furore meo et ardebit usque ad inferni novissima. Fire is kindled in my fury, and it shall burn to the last of hell.

That is, vengeance begins here in wicked men who will not amend themselves, and it shall torment them without end in hell.

Devorabitque terram cum germine suo, et montium fundamenta comburet. And it shall devour the earth with its fruitfulness, and the depth of the hills it shall burn.

That is, that same vengeance shall swallow up all lovers of earthly things with all their beauty, and it shall lay waste the hope of proud men.

Congregabo super eos mala, et sagittas meas complebo in eis. I shall gather up evils upon them, and Mine arrows I shall fulfil in them.

That is, all kinds of torments shall come upon them which are evil to them that suffer, but they are just in the judgment of God. And Mine arrows, which are sharp and sore biting pains, I shall fill them with ; that is, they shall be full of those pains.

Consumentur fame, et devorabunt eos aves morsu amarissimo. They shall be destroyed with hunger, and fowls shall devour them with a most bitter biting.

That is, in this world they shall die in soul for hunger of the Word of God, and so fiends shall eat them through venomous temptation in which they fall, which is to them a most bitter biting.

Dentes bestiarum immittam in eos, cum furore trahentium super terram, atque serpentium. I shall send the teeth of beasts into them, with the madness of dragons above the earth and of serpents.

That is, the gnawings of devils, which cruelly tear souls from God and scatter them in various vices; with the madness of them that draw and entice to carnal works, as madmen, avenging them; and of serpents, that is, of tempting privily; so that all evil may come upon evil men. For

Foris vastabit eos gladius et intus pavor, juvenem simul ac virginem, lactentem cum homine sene. The sword shall waste them without and fear within; the young man together with the maiden, the suckling with the old man.

That is, the sword of hell fire shall be their punishment in body and soul. They shall have the worm of an evil conscience biting and eating them for ever. And that sword shall destroy the young man, that is, every one who is wanton and lecherous, defouling his age in sin, and the maiden, that is, every one who is barren of good works. He sets the young man and maiden together in punishment because they are wont to be together in sin. The suckling is he that has no wit to do well, the old man is he that dwells in his old sin. Behold, you may see that He

excludes from the fire of hell neither man nor woman, young nor old. For of all manner of men, a great part go to hell.

Et dixi: ubinam sunt? cessare faciam ex hominibus memoriam eorum. And I said: Where are they? I shall make the memory of them cease from men.

I shall say to my lovers: What has now become of them that flourished in this world, and where is all their wealth? And now I shall so do for them that their memory shall never be amongst righteous men.

Sed propter iram inimicorum distuli, ne forte superbirent hostes eorum. But I delayed because of the ire of enemies, lest at some time their enemies might pride themselves. Et dicerent: manus nostra excelsa, et non dominus fecit hæc omnia. And they might say our high hand and not God did all these things.

God will not wreak vengeance as soon as men have sinned, but He delays it for a certain time that they to whom they have done harm might not grow proud and say: "Because of our merit, and because they were contrary to us, God destroys them." And so they might say that God did not do it all, because they think that their merit helped.

Gens absque consilio est et sine prudentia: utinam saperent et intellegerent, ac novissima providerent. It is a people without counsel and without prudence. God grant that they be wise and understand and foresee their end.

The nation of all unrighteous men is without counsel of health of soul and without the prudence to flee from sin. But may God grant that they have some savour of His love and understand the

will of Christ, to do it, and foresee their end that they may die securely, and contemplate without fear what may befall at last.

Quomodo persequebatur unus mille et duo fugarent decem millia? How one pursued a thousand and two chased ten thousand.

How this might be he explains and says :

Nonne ideo, quia deus suus vendidit eos, et dominus conclusit illos. Is it not therefore because their god sold them, and their lord locked them up?

As who should say : therefore they are overcome because God put them away from Him for their sins and locked them in the might of their enemies.

Non enim est deus noster ut dii eorum et inimici nostri sunt judices. For our God is not as their gods ; and our enemies are judges.

Our God is not as their gods, for they delight in wickedness, and our God leaves no sin unpunished. And our enemies are judges ; that is, they may bear witness to the fact that our God condemns and punishes evil deeds, for He often smites them that are in this world.

De vinea Sodomorum vinea eorum et de suburbanis Gomorrhæ. Their vines are the vines of Sodom, and of the suburb of Gomorrah.

Sodom means dumb ; Gomorrah, sharp. As much as to say, they are dumb to praise God and sharp in vices.

Uva eorum uva fellis et botri amarissimi. Their grape is the grape of gall, and of a most bitter plant.

That is, their fruit is all turned into bitter sin, and the flower that is in them is most bitter. That is, their carnal love and earthly covetousness is endless sorrow to them.

Fel draconum vinum eorum, et venenum aspidum insanabile. The gall of dragons is their wine, and the venom of snakes incurable.

The gall of dragons is the fell treason of backbiters, which treason they drink in with delight, as wine, and pour it out for other men. And the venom of snakes, that is, enduring malice, is their incurable drink, for they will not amend, and if men chastise them their malice increases and they are worse than they were.

Nonne hæc condita sunt apud me, et signata in thesauris meis? Are not these things established regarding me, and sealed in my treasury?

That is, all these evils are held in God's mind and kept under seal, to be put forth at the Judgment, when good men shall be made rich with God's treasure and evil men poor. For

Mea est ultio et ego retribuam eis in tempore, ut labatur pes eorum. Mine is the vengeance and I shall render to them in time, that their foot slip.

That is, to Me, says God, belongs the vengeance on sinful men ; not to man dwelling on earth. And I shall render to them according to their ill-will, at the time of the Judgment, though I wait awhile. That their foot slip ; that is, that all their pride and vanity, which bear them to hell, fall and break and wither to nothing.

Juxta est dies perditionis et adesse festinant tempora. The day of perdition is near, and the times are at hand.

Near is the day in which all men shall be lost from the company of saints, and the times for rendering to the evil and the good haste upon us, and come quickly. And then

Judicabit dominus populum suum, et in servis suis miserebitur. Our Lord shall judge His folk and He shall have mercy on His servants.

That is, He shall part His lovers from the lovers of this world. And to His servants He shall seem merciful and to all others just.

Videbit quod infirmata sit manus, et clausi quoque defecerunt, residuique consumpti sunt. He shall see that the hand be made sick and the bound fail, and the rest are destroyed.

He shall see, that is, He shall make it clear, that all that evil men do is not sufficient for their salvation, and those bound to the service of the devil faint for pains ; and all the others left and forsaken of God are destroyed in eternal death.

Et dicent : ubi sunt dii eorum, in quibus habebant fiduciam ? And they shall say : Where are their gods in whom they had trust ?

They that shall see their punishment shall say : Where now are all their vanities and lusts which they loved more than God, and in which they set their trust and their joy ?

De quorum victimis comedebant adipes et bibebant vinum libaminum. Of whose offerings they ate the fat, and they drank the wine of libations.

That is, of that which was offered to their uncleanness they had great abundance. And so they were drunk with lust and the pleasure of the earth, forgetting Jesus Christ. It is this wretchedness that you have loved more than God.

Surgant, et opitulentur vobis et in necessitate vos protegant. Let them rise and help you, and protect you in need.

It is in derision that He says : Let your gods that you have held in honour rise and come to help you if they can, since they may do you nothing but harm.

Videte quod ego sum solus et non sit alius deus præter me. See how I am alone and that there be no other God than me!

That is, I alone am God, and all things that you loved have deceived you. For

Ego occidam et ego vivere faciam: percutiam, et ego sanabo, et non est qui de manu mea possit eruere. I shall slay and I shall make to live, I shall smite and I shall heal, and there is none that may rescue from my hand.

That is, I am the author of life and death; and I shall smite them that I love, chastising them as a father does his son. And I shall make them perfectly whole after this life. And there is none that may rescue himself or another from My hand, for all creatures are in My power and the judging of all falls to Me.

Levabo ad cælum manum meam, et dicam: vivo ego in æternum. I shall lift My hand to heaven; and I shall say I live for ever.

That is, I shall show myself Lord, and mighty above all things, and I shall say openly: I live for ever. This shall be fulfilled as an oath.

Si acuero ut fulgur gladium meum, et arripuerunt judicium manus meæ. If I shall sharpen my sword like lightning and my hands had taken judgment.

That is, when I make ready My sword of punishment as lightning, coming suddenly and making men afraid; and let My power begin to show the last Doom.

Reddam ultionem hostibus meis, et his qui oderunt me retribuam. I shall render vengeance to Mine enemies and I shall repay them that hated Me.

I shall render the vengeance of eternal pain to My foes, that is, to all that were contrary to Me, despising My commandments;

and to them that hated Me, putting Me out of their hearts for love of other things, I shall give a dwelling place in hell. And then

Inebriabo sagittas meas sanguine et gladius meus devorabit carnes. I shall make drunk Mine arrows with blood and My sword shall devour flesh.

Mine arrows, that is, my sharp threats, I shall make drunk, that is, fulfil, in blood, namely, in the death of damned men. And My sword, that is, My vengeance, shall greedily devour all that lived carnally and so died. And I shall make drunk Mine arrows.

De cruore occisorum, et de captivitate, nudati inimicorum capitis. With the blood of the slain and with the wretchedness of the naked head of enemies.

Verily slain are they that are dead to the joy of God for ever. And made wretched in hell, the naked-headed, from all solace of heaven or of earth, the damned of the enemy. The naked-headed, he says, likening them to prisoners taken in conquest, who used to be shaven on the head and so sold.

Laudate gentes populum ejus quia sanguinem servorum suorum ulciscetur. Praise His folk, ye nations, for He shall avenge the blood of His servants.

Ye sinful nations, if you will not follow His folk in virtue and goodness, at least hold them all praiseworthy who love Him, and anger them not in word or in deed; for if you do, He will avenge it.

Et vindictam retribuet in hostes eorum, et propitius erit terræ populi sui. And He shall render vengeance to their enemies, and He shall be merciful to the land of His folk.

The land of His folk is Holy Church, in which His folk dwell

in truth and in charity. All others dwell in the land of the devil's folk, to whom He is just in vengeance and punishment.

The Hymn—Te Deum

Te Deum laudamus: te dominum confitemur. We praise Thee, O God: we acknowledge Thee, Lord.

It is commonly said that this song was made by Austin and Ambrose when Austin was converted, but this we may suppose under faith. But however that may be, this song is devout. First Christ is God and afterwards He is Lord. For He is not Lord unless He has a servant (that is, we who acknowledge Him).

Te æternum patrem omnis terra veneratur. All the earth worships Thee, everlasting Father.

Here we say by degrees the praise of God. First, how all men on earth worship God the Father, since all the Trinity is Father to men. For it made man out of nothing and therefore it is the Father. And so all the Trinity is Father to man, but the First Person is Father to His Son.

Tibi omnes angeli, tibi cæli, et universæ potestates, tibi cherubim et seraphim incessabili voce proclamant. All angels, all the heavens, and the powers of this world, cherubim and seraphim with voice incessant cry to Thee.

All earthly men are first in our knowledge, yet heaven and the citizens thereof are first by their nature, and especially the angels of the first two orders. For they are shining with knowledge and burning with charity. And all creatures proclaim to God that He made them, for this is natural. Nature teaches that to God's creatures. But angels cry afar with a spiritual voice, and they may not cease to do so. So they are of necessity blessed.

Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus, Dominus Deus sabaoth. Pleni sunt cæli et terra majestatis gloriæ tuæ. Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of the majesty of Thy glory.

This is the first song said to the Trinity, and therefore is this word " Holy " said thrice. And it betokens stability in God in the beginning of His works, in the doing and in the ending of them. And as God is great and glorious beyond measure and in every part of this world, so it is truly said that He fills both heaven and earth and all that He has of Himself with the glory of His majesty. Inasmuch as He is God, nevertheless, He displays it in measure and number and work as it behoves Him to do.

Te gloriosus apostolorum chorus, Te prophetarum laudabilis numerus, Te martyrum candidatus laudat exercitus. These three companies of the two testaments praise Thee, O God.

And, first, the glorious company of Christ's Apostles, then the worshipful number of prophets, and then the host of martyrs made white with their own blood. Since Christ is Head of Holy Church, and His Apostles follow Him next, many men suppose that they are before others in heaven. And because the fathers of the old law were the foundation of men of the new law, by a reasonable order they are put in the middle, and next to them follow the martyrs of the new law.

Te per orbem terram sancta confitetur ecclesia. Holy Church acknowledges Thee, God, throughout the whole world.

And as the Trinity is praised, so Holy Church has three degrees. The highest are the angels of heaven ; the second, the saints sleeping in purgatory ; the third, the folk that shall be saved, fighting here on earth. Of these and none other is Holy Church made. And this should be a restraint to us not to boast that we

are of Holy Church. And so, because of the mystery of the Trinity, confessors and virgins are included in the third part.[1]

Patrem immensæ majestatis, venerandum tuum verum et unicum Filium, Sanctum quoque Paraclitum Spiritum. This Church that is so scattered over the wide world acknowledges Thee Father of Majesty without end; and acknowledges the Second Person, Thy worthy, true and only Son; and it acknowledges, thirdly, the Holy Ghost, the Comforter.

And all these Three Persons are one God, and, as scholars say, majesty is proper to the Father. For He is in some manner first of all the Three Persons. Worship is proper to the Son, since He is of the wisdom of the Father, and made and bought mankind. The Holy Ghost is Comforter, for He makes a perfect end of burning in charity in all the saints that He will have, both here and in heaven, in sorrow and in joy.

Tu Rex gloriæ, Christe: Tu Patris sempiternus est filius. Tu ad liberandum suscepturus hominem non horruisti virginis uterum. Tu devicto mortis aculeo aperuisti credentibus regna cælorum. Tu ad dexteram Dei sedes, in gloria Patris. Judex crederis esse venturus. Thou, Christ, art king of glory and hast taken man's nature. Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father. Thou, to take man's nature in order to deliver it, didst not abhor the virgin's womb. Thou, having overcome the sharpness of death, didst open to men that believed in Thee the Kingdom of Heaven. Thou, after Thine ascension, sittest on God's right side.

And since Thou art God by Thy greater nature and brute man by the other nature, *Thou art believed to be the Judge to*

[1] *i.e.* of the previous versicle.

come at the last day. And in these articles of belief are many fair clergy. But we should not believe of the Father of Heaven that He has a right side or parts as a man has, but that the Manhood of Christ is blessed in heaven and next to His Godhead in glory amongst all creatures.

Te ergo quæsumus, tuis famuli subveni, quos pretioso sanguine redemisti. Æterna fac cum Sanctis tuis in gloria numerari: Salvum fac populum tuum, Domine, et benedic hæreditati tuæ. Et rege eos, et extolle illos usque in æternum.

By these two natures in Christ we are made bold to pray to Him. *And therefore we pray Thee to help Thy servants whom Thou hast bought by Thy precious Blood. Give them grace that they with Thy saints may be rewarded in bliss with everlasting glory. Lord, make Thy people safe and bless Thine heritage. And govern them here and raise them up to bliss without end.*

Christian men should receive the words of God's law as Ambrose and Austin and others before us have done, and fear not to grant that when Christ was dead He was less than His Father, and yet was God. But heretics say here that the author[1] on God's law was rude in his logic and often spoke falsely, so they will neither hold with him nor follow him. But let us say boldly to these heretics that they cannot alter this writer nor disprove his words by their new logic. And unless they hold with this writer they shall not be saved.

Per singulos dies benedicimus te. Et laudamus nomen tuum in sæculum, et in sæculum sæculi.

We are made to serve God and in that to have bliss. Wherefore we sing to God and say that *we bless Him every day*

[1] *i.e.* authority.

that we live in the world. And we praise His name both in this world and the next. When our soul was made, then God made a new world, and by all this world we should praise God in one way whilst we live here, and in another according as there are two durations that God gives to this world. One is without, that men call time, and the other is within, better than this time : and this is often called the world of worlds.

Dignare, Domine, die isto, sine peccato nos custodire. Miserere nostri Domine, miserere nostri. Fiat misericordia tua, Domine, super nos, quemadmodum speravimus in te. In te, Domine, speravi : non confundar in æternum.

Here we pray to our God by the hope that we have centred in Him. And so : *Lord, vouchsafe to keep us this day without sin. Lord, have mercy on us, have mercy on us. Lord, let Thy mercy be upon us, as we have hoped in Thee. Lord, I have hoped in Thee, let me not be confounded for ever.*

In these four verses there are many fair hopes. In the first verse we pray God to keep us from great sin that never shall have end, and every day we need to pray for this. So Christ teaches us to say in our *Pater Noster* that God may deliver us from this evil. But, as St John says, if we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves and truth is not in us ; but as long as we dwell here we ask God's mercy for our mischievous body, and more for our soul. But in the next world this mischief departs. And because every man should know that he has full hope in God, in the third verse we pray to God for His mercy as we hope in Him ; and more we may not ask.

In the fourth verse we turn ourselves into one person of the Church and say in one person for this Church that we have hoped

in this Lord, and for this hope we ask that we be not confounded for ever. Inasmuch as Christ teaches us to ask generally, so these saints surround their prayer with charity to ask this end in the name of Holy Church. And this is the fulfilment of our asking that may happen in this world. Because this evil [1] and this confusion are the greatest of all others, so it is a great grace to lack this confusion for ever, for then we shall not come to hell, but by all means go to heaven. No punishment is evil but this, or to imagine this, as no joy is good but bliss or the way to bliss. Men should understand this meaning of this holy song and leave all worldly chanting that is here practised wickedly. For it often distracts them from the joy of the next world, and it is difficult for it to profit men's souls even as much as it pleases men's ears. And certainly it profits nothing otherwise, for, as Austin acknowledges, he sins grievously whenever the song pleases him more than the meaning of the song.

The Song of the Three Children—Benedicite

Benedicite omnia opera domini domino laudate et superexaltate eum in sæcula.

This psalm was made according to a miracle that God worked in the time of Nebuchadnezzar when He saved three Jews, because of the stableness of their faith, from the fiery furnace that was made hot to burn them. These three persons have double names in divers languages. They are called Ananias, Azarias and Misael, and in other places Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. This song exalts God and speaks to all His

[1] *i.e.* the opposite of hope, namely, "despair."

creatures, bidding them praise God, since they are all made for this end. And thus the first verse bids

All ye works of the Lord, bless the Lord: praise and exalt Him for ever.

There are three words in this verse that should be thus understood : since every creature acknowledges naturally that God made it out of nothing, every creature should of its nature praise God. And if it does so well, serving God as it should, then it speaks well of God, and grants that God is blessed over all other things. And this speaking well that is serving well is the blessing that God speaks of here. And thus do all things bless God, except only evil men and fiends. The second word of this verse says that all things should bless the Lord, and this word Lord by itself is taken to mean God, the Lord of Lords.

In the third instance we should understand that, in Greek speech, that thing superexalts another thing which says that it surpasses all creatures. And so superexalting is properly praise proffered to God ; and thus these three things, bless, praise and superexalt, signify the Trinity, and they are one in substance ; that is, they are praise appropriated to God.

Benedicite angeli domini domino : benedicite cæli domino. Ye angels of the Lord, bless the Lord, ye heavens bless the Lord.

This verse begins the order of blessing in which creatures should bless God. But there are two kinds of creatures, spiritual and bodily. The best creature of God is what is generally called here a good angel. And thus these creatures have a way to bless God by wisdom and will, and amongst bodily creatures the heavens are generally the best.

Benedicite aquæ omnes quæ super cælos sunt domino : benedicite omnes virtutes domini domino. Ye waters that are above the heavens bless the Lord : all ye virtues of the Lord bless the Lord.

Here men suppose that by these waters that are above the heavens are to be understood all the parts of the heavens above the Sun, planets and stars. For these three parts, because of their light, are commonly called the heavens, and those other parts of heaven that are clear as water are called the waters above the heavens. For in them are these three parts suspended. And it is most likely that these waters are of the same nature as those beneath the Moon, but they differ in properties. For the waters that are above the Moon are stable and clear and everlasting, but the waters that are beneath the Moon are fluctuating and unstable. The waters that are above may well be pierced, for they are subtile[1]; but the waters beneath may be divided, for they are both heavy and gross. And the diversity of such qualities exists in substances of one nature. The virtues that are in heaven are the powers thereof to rule this earth, as each part of heaven has power over many earthly things.

Benedicite sol et luna domino : benedicite stellæ cæli domino. Sun and Moon, bless ye the Lord : stars of heaven, bless ye the Lord.

The Sun and Moon are the surpassing lights, and after them are the stars, and some of these are called planets — such as the five with the Sun and the Moon, which men of astronomy call the seven planets of heaven. And they stand together in this order : Saturn is the highest planet, then Jupiter, and then Mars ;

[1] Tenuous. "Subtile matter" (*materia subtilis*) was also used by Descartes to describe the fluid which he supposed to fill the whole of space.

but the Sun, as King, stands in the middle of all these planets and has these three above him and another three beneath him, which are called by philosophers Venus, Mercury and the Moon. So that the Moon is the lowest planet and takes its light, with the others, from the Sun. And all these seven are wandering stars because of the changing movement that they have. For they are sometimes joined together[1] and sometimes one against another.[2] And this happens to them all because of the proper movement in their orbits. But above Saturn there are stars that are all in one orbit, and these are ever far away and make one figure in their orbit.

Benedicite omnis imber et ros domino: benedicite omnes spiritus dei domino. Rain and dew, bless ye the Lord: all the winds of God, bless ye the Lord.

Here these three children of the Jews name the creatures beneath the Moon. But they do not name the four spheres[3] in the order that the philosophers do, who say that under the Moon is a sphere of subtile fire, and in that is the sphere of the air, and in the air the sphere of the water, and in the middle of the world, and lowest, is the sphere of the earth. This reason moved these clerks to include a subtile sphere of fire: they saw that gross fire amongst us is both hot and dry and a light moving upward, and all this is of its nature; and thus a clean fire must in its nature be more light, more hot and more dry. And all these spheres are fragmentary, but not so the spheres above the Moon. Clerks say that rain comes thus: the planets, and especially the

[1] *i.e.* in conjunction.
[2] *i.e.* in opposition.
[3] The four "elements"—fire, air, water, earth.

Sun, draw up from the water and the moist places a subtile body far into the air, and in the middle of the air it is naturally cold at nights, for this matter is naturally cold, and there is wanting the heat of fire and light ; and thus cold makes this moist matter run together into small drops, which thus get heaviness, and come down in the form of rain.

But sometimes these planets of heaven, about the time the Sun goes down, lift up a subtile matter but a little space from the earth, and after the Sun is hidden, the cold of the night condenses this matter and so it comes down anon in a more subtile form than rain, that is, dew.

There are many winds here, such as some winds that are in beasts, and some are enclosed within the earth, and some blow freely between the earth and the stars of heaven. And it is this wind that is called here Spirit of God. For, differing from others, this wind is by its nature ever mixed with matter that comes from the earth and the planets ; with the stars of heaven and the hurtling of clouds this wind moves now to one place and now to another, according to the changing of the Mover.

Benedicite ignis et æstus domino : benedicite frigus et æstus domino.
Fire and heat, bless ye the Lord : cold and summer bless ye the Lord.

It is known by faith how all this world profits man whilst he serves God in grace, and how otherwise it fights against man. This common fire that we use and the burning thereof warms men in cold times, and helps to prepare their meat and drink. So also cold in its time gives comfort to man's body and the heat of summer brings forth fruit, so that unless this were so men could not live.

Benedicite rores et pruina domino : benedicite gelu et frigus domino. Dews and hoar frost, bless ye the Lord : frost and cold bless ye the Lord.

There are some dews that moisten the earth for coming days in the hot weather, and when the cold has frozen this matter it is called hoar frost. Frost is more intense and lasts longer, and cold comes to many things. And as these temper man's body so do they temper the earth and the fruit.

Benedicite glacies et nives domino : benedicite noctes et dies domino. Ice and snow, bless ye the Lord : nights and days, bless ye the Lord.

Doubtless, ice helps many men to pass over waters to many countries and snow helps to temper the earth. For a good snow is worth a dunging, because it keeps the heat within the earth so that it does not creep out through small holes ; and so it quickens the roots of growing things within the earth. It is well known to clerks that snow is engendered high up in the air when watery matter, great in quantity with regard to the substance, is frozen, and so falls down ; and it has the whiteness of clear and stable matter.

And because men cannot always work, God has ordained night and day, the night for rest and the day for work. And doubtless also in these times He tempers the qualities of the earth. All these things instruct men both of virtues and of vices and of heaven and of hell : to yearn for the one and to fear the other.

Benedicite lux et tenebræ domino : benedicite fulgura et nubes domino. Light and darkness, bless ye the Lord, lightnings and clouds, bless ye the Lord.

Light strengthens men's sight and quickens bodies here on earth, and makes them think upon the true light which is God,

the first Life. Darkness does good to the sight and tempers men's wits to take their rest, and signifies the darkness of sin and thereafter the darkness of hell. And darkness is a creature of God, since God has ordained it amongst other things; and so not every creature is a substance that may exist by itself.

Clerks know that clouds hurtle together and bring fire out of their parts, as also when they break by violence that before were fastened together. Then they make a great noise which men call thunder. And because sight is swifter than hearing, since light comes more quickly than the air trembles, therefore men see lightning first, and afterwards they hear the thunder of the clouds. And all this helps men to a mystical veiled knowledge of God's law.

Benedicat terra dominum: laudet et superexaltet eum in sæcula. Let the earth bless the Lord: let it praise and exalt Him for ever.

The earth serves God well when it keeps the middle of the world and gathers the light of heaven plenteously and brings forth fruit as God bids. And for this cause has God ordained the earth to be thick and stable, to reflect the light from heaven and feed the fruit that grows within it. And because of the stability of the earth that shall last after Doomsday and bless God beyond time these children say, let the earth bless God for ever.

Benedicite montes et colles domino: benedicite universa germinantia in terra domino. Ye hills, both greater and less, bless the Lord: all things that burgeon in the earth, bless ye the Lord.

It is known that hills contain stones and metal ore and bring forth many herbs that would not grow so well in the valleys. And because there shall be no need for these things at Doomsday,

therefore God's law says that the hills and valleys shall be made plain and the earth shall take a round shape, and heaven and water and earth shall remain.

Benedicite fontes domino : benedicite maria et flumina domino.
Wells, bless ye the Lord : seas and floods, bless ye the Lord.

It is apparent to men what good wells do to mankind, for they would often lack drink but for the use they make of wells. And usually in the hot summer wells are cold, and hot in the winter. It is known to clerks that water is generated in pores deep under the earth, running and springing up at a point. So much so that in many places where no water seems to be, men may make a hole so deep in the earth that good and plentiful water will spring. And because this water in summer runs through cold earth when the pores are open it is commonly more cold in summer-time ; and in winter, when it is frosty, the pores of the earth are closed, and the heat of the sun, formerly in the earth, is allowed to come out by small holes, and therefore what comes through such pores has heat in winter, and smoke comes out, and steam, for that reason. Men eat better in cold weather than they do in hot weather, when the heat is scattered forth without.

The seas in divers countries have divers properties. As (for example) our sea of England flows twice in a day and night : because the moon that moves these waters so looks towards our British sea that, by direct light and reflected, in night and day it moves it twice. Some other seas never flow, and some but once a month, and according as heaven looks upon them they have divers properties. The seas engender many fishes for the sustenance of mankind, so that by many men's reckoning there are many more fishes in the sea than there are beasts upon the land.

For the space and matter is greater. Therefore David says in the psalm that men who wend their way to the sea may see the wonderful works that God has done in the world. For no man in this life is sufficient to describe fully the nature of fishes. And the sea contains, with the fishes, many other precious things, such as salt and pearls and many other precious stones.

Clerks say that the sea is salt because salt is generated by nature thus : when sand is made hot with the sun and soaked long in the water it takes naturally a savour that men call saltness, and on this account in some lands men have salt for their sand. And since the sea ebbs and flows, from the south to the north, of necessity salt is mixed with many seas, and with waters where the sea flows. And here men may see the causes that operate in this matter. It is commonly asked why floods on land are not salt. But to this men usually say that some floods and wells are salt—when the full cause of saltness is found in these wells. But the sea is commonly salt because it receives more of the light of heaven, for it is more extensive and near heaven, and so more disposed to receive light; but bushes and many other causes hinder floods from thus receiving this light.

Also the sand of the south sea is nearer the sun and in greater heat, and this is mixed with other seas and makes them salt by contact, so that abundant cause of saltness makes abundance of salt. And by this men may see why salt is both white and clear : because salt, for the great part thereof, is of the nature of water; and water, when it turns to saltness, must be clear by its nature, and such water mixed with earth must be white by the same nature.

But yet men ask commonly why salt is dissolved thus, but

crystal and other stones are not loosened as salt. Here clerks say that some bodies are made dense in divers degrees and some bodies may be dissolved and some not, such as many stones. And of the first, clerks give a rule that the bodies that are hardened by cold are loosened by heat, and those hardened by heat are loosened by cold, as ice and lead are hardened by cold and they are softened again by heat. But because salt is hardened by heat and dryness, therefore it is naturally softened by a body of contrary qualities, such as cold and moist bodies. And thus salt is hot by nature and has its virtues on this account.

Benedicite cete et omnia quæ moventur in aquis domino : benedicite omnes volucres cæli domino. Whales and all things that move in the waters, bless ye the Lord : all fowls of heaven, bless ye the Lord.

It is commonly said that the whale is the greatest fish in the sea, and so by this great fish we are to understand all other fishes, both shellfish and scaled, or of whatever kind they are. They all turn to the help of man and do that office which God has ordained. And thus as beasts upon the land draw in earth to temper their bodies, so fishes in the flood draw in water to temper themselves. But as beasts are more subtle[1] than fishes in their shape, so they are more venomous and hurtful to man. Thus fishes are nearer to the elements and more religious to eat than are fowls or beasts of the earth, for these are nearer man's nature. And yet the first book of Holy Writ, which men call *Genesis*, says that both fishes and fowls come of the substance of the water, and yet God shows His craft in putting them so far apart. For the Lord is able to order all things as He pleases. But water

[1] Complex.

is nearer heaven by nature than is the earth of which beasts are. And thus both fishes and fowls keep some property of water.

Benedicite omnes bestiæ et pecora domino : benedicite filii hominum domino. All kinds of beasts and wandering beasts, bless ye the Lord : sons of men, bless ye the Lord.

Here we may know that these beasts were the work of the sixth day, and man was made on the same day, of lime of the earth. As both fishes and fowls were made by God on the fifth day, beasts are of more kinds than those that go on their feet, since worms and snakes are beasts. But they do not help the work of man. But there are other beasts that draw the plough and help to carry men, as the horse. And it is necessary to teach men to bless God by good works, as these beasts take instruction from men and serve them to men's honour.

Benedicat israel dominum : laudet et superexaltet eum in sæcula. Ye folk of Israel, bless the Lord : praise Him and exalt Him for ever.

Men may serve God in two ways here on earth. Some are labourers, like the beasts that this song has spoken of ; and some are more wise, as angels, and these should serve God more highly. And because this service has its foundation in the spirit, therefore it lasts after Doomsday. And Israel, that is, a man serving God, is a token not only of Jacob but of all his kindred that come from him, and especially of his spiritual kindred.

Benedicite sacerdotes domini domino : benedicite servi domini domino. Priests of the Lord, bless ye the Lord : servants of the Lord, bless ye the Lord.

Among all folk that serve God, as do the children of Israel, priests should serve Him most and teach other men to serve Him

They should multiply the servants of God both amongst themselves and amongst other men.

Benedicite spiritus et animæ justorum domino : benedicite sancti et humiles corde domino. Spirits and souls of just men, bless ye the Lord : holy and meek men of heart, bless ye the Lord.

In this verse we may see how none but just men serve God with enough merit to win the bliss of heaven. We may see also in these words how just men have two lives, contemplative and active, and in both these they should serve God. We may see further how these men whom God has ordained for bliss are here holy and confirmed, and especially meek of heart.

Benedicite anania azaria misael domino : laudate et superexaltate eum in sæcula. Ananias, Azarias, Misael, bless ye the Lord : praise and exalt Him for evermore.

Since the good deeds in God's miracles oblige men to serve God more, these three children should especially serve God because of His gifts. God sent His angel to them and led them safely into the furnace and made the air cold and good, and burnt the Chaldeans without. What man should bless God more than these three that were thus helped ?

Benedicamus patrem et filium cum sancto spiritu : laudemus et superexaltemus eum in sæcula. Let us bless the Father and Son and the Holy Ghost : let us praise and exalt Him without end.

Christian men have to say this verse in addition to that which is in Daniel's book, to teach them that they should praise God as these three children of Israel, and especially those Christian

men who have the grace of God to quench the flame of sins, as these three children by a miracle of God quenched the flame of fire. For this burning of the soul with sin is more perilous than the other, and therefore men should praise God the more for saving them from this burning. And our Church has wisely first specified the Trinity and afterwards by a single pronoun declared the Onehead of God.

Benedictus es domine in firmamento cæli et laudabilis et gloriosus et superexaltatus in sæcula. Blessed art Thou, Lord, in the firmament of heaven and worthy to be praised, and glorious and exalted for evermore.

This verse makes a knot to this song of these children, where we make an open confession that God is surpassingly blessed. Not that God has need to be blessed by us, for He is blessed in Himself as much as anything may be, and our word and our blessing cannot enlarge this blessing of God. But by this humble confession and joy in the blessing of God we hope that God will bless us, both here and in heaven.

The Song of Zachary—Benedictus

Benedictus dominus deus israel quia visitavit et fecit redemptionem plebis suæ.

This psalm is of more authority than the previous song,[1] for it is believed from the gospel, as St Luke tells it. And Zachary, the Baptist's father, first said this psalm. In the beginning he was dumb, and Gabriel spoke to him, and then followed the miracle of the gift of speech to him. So also there was another

[1] The Song of the Three Children.

miracle in the saying of this psalm, when God enlightened the prophet and told him hidden truths. The prophet begins thus, and says to Holy Church :

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited and wrought the redemption of His people.

It is commonly said that there are three psalms made—of Mary, and Simeon, and of this Zachary ; and they are ordained by the Church to be sung at times according to these persons, and the intention for which they were said. This psalm is sung in the Church at the end of Matins, for John the Baptist was a lantern before the Sun, to make men ready to take the light of the Sun. As this psalm is sung before sunrise, this prophet knew in spirit the grace which God had given him to hear. And therefore he begins by praising God, and first calls Him Lord of all men of the world ; and then he calls Him God of Israel. For God in one sense is He Who sees all things, and Israel is as much as to say men that see God, indicating Jacob and the men that come from him ; and it is commonly taken to mean the saints in heaven, who first experience His Lordship and afterwards His Godhead.

This God has visited His people by the miracles of the old law, but now recently in the birth of John the Baptist. And afterwards also God has redeemed mankind ; for which Christ was made man. This prophecy was given of God ; and since the suffering of Christ follows afterwards, the prophecy was in the foretelling of it. And here Zachary showed himself a prophet in speaking of this as an event passed. For prophets have this manner, because of the certainty of their knowledge, to speak their words as of the past although they are of the future.

Et erexit cornu salutis nobis in domo david pueri sui. And God has raised up the horn of salvation for us in the house of David His child.

Often a horn by many properties betokens a power shown to the people. And because Christ came of David, who was God's child, this horn was raised up in David's house. Christ was the King of Peace, as David was a meek king. And other things in the life of David were a figure of Jesus Christ.

Sicut locutus est per os sanctorum qui a sæculo sunt prophetarum ejus. As God has spoken by the mouth of saints, who are from the ages God's own prophets.

This redemption of mankind by God's own Son was often prophesied from the beginning of the world. And also these prophets were all withdrawn from the world, and they spoke with one mouth by one spirit that breathed in them.

Salutem ex inimicis nostris et de manu omnium qui oderunt nos. Salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all those that have hated us.

For this has God spoken by the aforesaid prophecies : how we should have help from both men and fiends, and be delivered from the hand of all those that hated us.

Ad faciendum misericordiam cum patribus nostris et memorari testamenti sui sancti.

God has promised by His prophets previously *to have mercy on our fathers and be mindful of His holy testament.* God had promised to Abraham in the old law that He should multiply his seed as the stars of heaven and as the gravel of the sea. And in many other matters God promised Abraham and other holy

fathers things that were not fulfilled for them here on earth, and thus faith teaches us that these were spoken of figuratively as of gifts that they should have in the next world. So the earth that Abraham slept on, that God gave to him and to his seed, figures to them heaven, which is called in God's law the land of living man. And so it is of other gifts that were promised to our fathers. For God spoke but little of earthly riches, because it behoves both the Lord and His true children to give heavenly gifts and rest in them.

Jusjurandum quod juravit ad abraham patrem nostrum daturum se nobis.

When Abraham should have offered Isaac, his own son by his wife, *God swore a great oath to him that He would give Himself to us* to redeem mankind. The story is known how God tempted Abraham, and bade him rise and take up his own son Isaac, whom he loved, and offer him on a hill. And Abraham did thus as God bade him do, and therefore God promised him that He would give Himself for the honour of God and the saving of mankind. Wherefore was Christ born, as Isaias tells.

Ut sine timore de manu inimicorum nostrorum liberati serviamus illi, in sanctitate et justicia coram ipso omnibus diebus nostris.

The end for which God bought us at so great a cost and so generously was this : *that, being delivered without fear from the hand of our enemies, we might serve God in holiness and righteousness, in which we should live before Him all our days.* And here we may see how unnatural we are : after God has done this kindness for this end to mankind, and it is so profitable and honest for man, yet man leaves it and goes the wrong way for fear of

the world or for love of his flesh, and so becomes a servant to them from whom God has delivered him. And so man forsakes God and betakes himself to the devil.

Et tu, puer, propheta altissimus vocaberis, præibis enim ante faciem domini parare vias ejus : ad dandam scientiam salutis plebi ejus in remissionem peccatoram eorum.

Here this prophet turns his speech to his own son and says these true words to John the Baptist : "*Thou, child, shall be called the prophet of the All-highest, and therefore thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to make ready His ways : and to give knowledge of salvation to His people, unto the forgiveness of their sins.* And all this was displayed in the life of John the Baptist, for he forsook the world and chastised his flesh, and did not go to the Schools to beguile his neighbours, but kept the state of innocence in desert places. And our religious who say that they follow him gather themselves into convents and live the contrary life ; for instead of solitude they have chosen flocks, instead of desert places they have chosen cities, instead of great penance according with the state of innocence they have chosen a life of pleasure, in order to feed their flesh ; and where they should forsake elaborate buildings they choose houses and cloisters to hide their riches. And thus they betake themselves to the prince of this world and quickly make ready his ways, to receive his servants. And thus as this prince is contrary to Christ, so these religious are contrary to the Baptist ; and yet they feign falsely to be something of Christ and something of the Baptist, to deceive the people. But as in conspiracies many things are called by good names to deceive the people and rob them of their goods, so in these orders are feigned many holinesses for a false end—to

blind the people and to suck their blood, pretending it is for their good.

Per viscera misericordiæ dei nostri in quibus visitavit nos oriens exalto. Illuminare his qui in tenebris et in umbra mortis sedent ad dirigendos pedes nostros in viam pacis.

Here we pray this Child, Who is given to us and is both God and man, Who is so full of wisdom and grace and is come from high heaven to visit His folks, *that He send light to us that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to direct our feet in the way of peace.* Here we pray not to live a worldly life, pleasing to our flesh, as brothers neither of Christ nor of the Baptist, nor to go the way of war to fight with our enemies, nor to despoil the people and gather their goods into our castles, nor by the craft of flattery to please the world; but even to live the contrary life as did Christ and the Baptist. For by wandering in such ways men may well see whose children they are and for whom they make ready. For the king of all such children of pride, who is Antichrist, leads such religious and teaches them these deceits. Wherefore some men say that they are dead corpses gathered from their sepulchres, wrapped in the clothes of grief and driven by the devil to draw men. And thus they wear the badges of hypocrisy. It were less harmful to men of Christ's school to deal with a legion of the fiends of hell than with a little convent of such quick devils. For some men they rob and some men they make mad, and by their feigned hypocrisy and the deceits of the devil they beguile more men than do other fiends. May the Lord deliver His folk from the perils of these false friars, for if these last be passed the seven before them are easier. And of a truth these religious, thus bound to the devil, excel wicked women

whose traces they follow. For the appearance of holy men deceives many folk.

The Song of Mary—Magnificat

Magnificat anima mea dominum. My soul worships the Lord.

Our Lady, Saint Mary, after the greeting of Gabriel, the conceiving of God's Son, and the blessing of Elizabeth, who called Her the Mother of Our Lord, rose not in exaltation of thought, nor in swelling of pride, but in sweetness of heart and in most devout meekness. She thanks God for all His goodness, and says: "My soul, filled with His grace, worships—that is, praises perfectly—the Lord of heaven and earth, Who has given this grace to me." As who should say: "I do not consider myself great, but I praise God for all His gifts with all my heart."

That soul worships God which is not weighed down by wicked thoughts, nor defiled by unclean pleasure, nor puffed up with improper bearing, but with all virtues of nature and of grace stands in enduring love and stable meekness.

Et exultavit spiritus meus in deo salutari meo. And my spirit rejoiced in God my salvation.

Not only does this blessed Maiden and Mother praise God entirely, but she says also that her gladness and her joy are in having God in mind, in the loving and pleasing of Whom she places all her salvation. She rejoiced not in herself nor in the vanities of this life, as our foolish maidens do now who rejoice more in all the things of this world, which they seek to love, than in God their Saviour.

But though the souls of holy men worthily and wonderfully worship God by rejoicing in Jesus, this blessed maiden praised

God before them all in the privilege of burning love, and with singular joy she was glad in Christ. The songs of praise are sweetest in her mouth and the notes of love are most delectable in the melody that she gives forth.

Now that spirit rejoices in God which is verily kindled with the fire of the Holy Ghost ; which, because of the greatness of the love of Christ, is pleased by no passing thing ; and to which all earthly desire is vile and loathsome. But all its joy and comfort are in Christ, of Whom it hopes for eternal life and salvation.

Quia respexit humilitatem ancillæ suæ : ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes. Because He looked upon the meekness of His handmaiden : lo, henceforward, all generations shall call me blessed.

The wretched women of this world love creatures which please them, and they worship them and rejoice in them. But Our Lady placed all her love and joy in God, and wholly in His worship. And because He looked with the kindly eye of grace upon the meekness of her that was full of all good dispositions and more obedient unto Him than any other handmaiden may be upon earth—" lo, henceforward," she says, " because of that meekness or that looking of God upon me as if He were taking in my love at a glance, all generations of Christian men in this world shall call me blessed." And that is fitting,

Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est et sanctum nomen ejus. For He that is mighty has done great things to me and His name is holy.

He did great things to her in quantity of grace, greater in the ministration of the angel, and greatest through the wonders of the virtues of God. In the womb He made perfect her sanctification,

in virtue He gave her purity of life, and in the first offering of the vow of maidenhood, and in all these things that seem greatest, He gave her deepest meekness. Thus He did to me, that is mighty; and He whose name is holy hallowed me and all that are holy, by His goodness and not by their merit.

Et misericordia ejus a progenie in progenies timentibus eum. And His mercy is from generation to generation to those fearing Him.

His mercy, delivering from sin and sorrow, is from the generation of holy men to the generations of sinful men, for so are they made the sons of righteous men. But this is only for them that fear Him. For without the fear of God may no man be made righteous.

Fecit potentiam in brachio suo dispersit superbos mente cordis sui. He did might with His arm. He scattered the proud from the thought of their heart.

God showed that might is in His virtue when He placed the help of those who love Him in His Son. Then He did might with His arm, and so He scattered, that is, He sundered, the proud —those who seek the way of superiority over others—from the thought of their heart; that they might not do in deed the wickedness that they sought in their will.

Deposuit potentes de sede et exultavit humiles. He put down the mighty from the settle, and He raised the meek.

The mighty, that is, those who rejoice in their might and use it wrongly and wickedly, he put down from the settle of their dignity and honour, that their last wretchedness might be to remember their former state. And He raised to the settle of the fellowship of angels the meek; that is, those who consider

nothing to be lower than themselves and surrender themselves to be fouled under foot, as is the earth, by all who will. And therefore they are worthy to be exalted because of that great meekness whereby they are not stirred to wrath if men say evil of them and do evil to them.

Esurientes implevit bonis et divites dimisit inanes. The hungry He filled full of good things and the rich He left empty.

Our Lady calls them hungry who greatly desire righteousness, wisdom, grace, and strength in the Holy Ghost, who are ever stirred with the desire to receive more and continue in it. And such He fills full of gifts—profitable, delectable and honest. The first are an aid to merit, the second draw out yearning, the third make perfect to the work of virtue. These gifts have a sweet savour for the soul.

There are three kinds of mind that God does not fill, that is, those that desire the pomp of the world, earthly things, and the harm of their neighbours. Their first hunger is of bitterness, the second of avarice, the third of backbiting. And the rich men of this world in wealth and ease who pretend that they are rich in spiritual gifts He left empty of grace and joy. Though they be full of favour and the vile pleasures of the body, yet in the Day of Doom they shall find nothing but pain.

Suscepit israel puerum suum recordatus misericordiæ suæ. He received Israel His child, mindful of His mercy. Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros Abraham et semini ejus in sæcula. As He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and His seed for ever.

Thus shall the letter[1] be joined: He received Israel His bairn, for meekness and purity, as He spoke to our fathers. And

[1] *i.e.* verses.

He did that, mindful of His mercy which He promised to do to Abraham and his seed ; that is, to all His followers in truth and righteousness, whilst the world lasts. He adopted Israel in nature, in grace, in defence, in government. Through taking upon Himself our nature He snatched us from death and from the ire of God ; through adopting us in grace he drove sin out of us ; through adopting us in defence He delivers us, that our enemy may not have the mastery over us ; through adopting us in governing He leads us out of the perils of this world ; through adopting us in blessedness He brings us out of the wretchedness of sin and sorrow and sets us in the joy of heaven. Amen.

Jesus Christ, Saint Mary's Son, that is one God Almighty (have mercy on me !).

The Song of Simeon—Nunc Dimittis

This is the third psalm sung by priests before going to bed late at night and is figurative of the desire that Christian men should have at the hour of their death. For the profit of Christ's Church the gospel tells us that there was an old man who was named Simeon, and had foreknowledge from God that he should not see death before he saw Christ. And when Christ came into the temple he took Him in his arms and sang joyfully this song of God : "*Nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine, in pace. Quia viderunt oculi mei salutare tuum, quod parasti ante faciem omnium populorum, lumen ad revelationem gentium et gloriam plebis tuæ israel.*" *Lord, Thou dost dismiss now Thy servant in peace, according to Thy word,* which Thou hast spoken before. For now I am ready to die, *because mine eyes have seen* Thine own Son Christ,

that is, *Thine own salvation* to man. *That Thou hast made ready to set before the face of all the folk* that shall be saved ; which salvation is *a light for the revelation of heathen men and also for the glory of Thy folk, Israel.*

This old man was strengthened in soul by faith, for he believed that heaven should soon afterwards be opened and Christ with His disciples should enter into heaven. And therefore he desired then to be dead and was in haste to be with Christ. For that he truly hoped, since he had foreknowledge from God, Who pledged Himself to this. And so are many men disturbed who wish that Christ's Church were somewhat amended according to Christ's Ordinance, and that they should not die before this time might come, when Christ might be shown in His temple and as He was born, a poor young child. And if this venom of endowing were somewhat quenched, then they might be ready to die to Christ, for they hope that Christ is enlightenment here to men to show them His will as His law teaches, and so He shall be glorious to men in heaven. Amen.

The song of Our Lady, in which she praises God, is sung at evensong, that is, our first hour. For she was the beginning of the salvation of mankind. And these three psalms are of equal authority, since they are all three of the truth of the gospel.

The Creed of St Athanasius

Quicumque vult salvus esse ante omnia opus est ut teneat catholicam fidem.

It is usually said that there are three creeds. The first is that of the Apostles, which men commonly know. The second is that

of the Church, which declares the former creed. The third creed is that of the Trinity, which is sung as a psalm and was made in Greek speech by one who is called Athanasius, and was afterwards turned into Latin, and to some extent amended and ordered to be said at the first hour.

This psalm tells much of the Trinity, but it is not necessary for every man here to know it, since a man may be saved if he believes in God and hopes that God will teach him afterwards what is necessary. And so, as it is commonly said, men believe in two ways. Some believe expressly that there is but one God, and some believe confusedly whatever God wishes them to believe, and that if, on the other hand, they live rightly as God wishes them to live, they are in a good way to attain bliss hereafter. For our creed should be mixed with love and faith, so that faith may teach our reason how good our God is. And so the Holy Ghost taught how we should love our God. And on this account this psalm, which is less than the Gospel, says that *whoever will be saved, it is necessary before all things that he hold the common faith.* For thereby is man saved. And it does not seem enough for men to say in word that they believe fully what Holy Church believes, for so say Paynims and many out of the faith, and so men usually say that they all have such faith. And so love and good living are necessary to a right faith. But God forbid that men believe that every man who will be saved must believe expressly every word that is said here, for few or none are in that state, either Greeks or Latins. And yet, even for us, English fails to express what little we believe. For faith is of truth, which is before our languages. And, as we say, God gives faith both to children and to men although they have not the power to learn faith of their brethren.

Quam nisi quisque integram inviolatamque servaverit absque dubio in æternum peribit. This common faith is of this kind: that unless each man keep it whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish for ever.

There are some that believe one article and think another false, as Jews and Paynims held one belief and not another, and therefore they fall short of full faith. It is all one to a man whether he has no arms or whether he is whole in his arms, if he is wounded to death. And we can see how faith is here a token of the truth that men believe to be grounded in God. And in two other ways men receive faith. Sometimes faith is called a special quality, by which a man is named a true man in God, and this faith is the way of a true soul. In the third way faith signifies a thought that a man has instead of the first faith. And this faith most easily falls from a man.

But he shall understand that many men need not have open knowledge of all points of faith, but they must needs believe that there is one God, and love Him and serve Him without damnable sin. And these men believe generally all that is to be believed, and fail in no point, as do untrue men. Others that have more knowledge of God should believe more, and every man should by all means keep himself from false faith, that he believe not contrary to our faith.

Fides autem catholica hæc est ut unum deum in trinitate et trinitatem in unitate veneremur. This is the common faith that every man should believe: that we worship one God in Trinity of Persons, which God is a Trinity in a Unity of Godhead.

That is to say, we shall believe that there is but one God, which is Three Persons, and these Three Persons are the same God.

Neque confundentes personas neque substantiam separantes. And thus shall we be true : neither confusing these Persons with one another, nor separating the substance of God in these Persons.

That is to say, we shall not believe that the Father may be the Son, nor the Son the Holy Ghost ; but that these are three Persons ; that no one is another nor part of another. And all these three Persons and each by Himself are the same substance and so the same God.

Alia est enim persona patris, alia filii, alia spiritus sancti. Sed patris et filii et spiritus sancti una est divinitas, æqualis gloria, coæterna majestas. There is a Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another Person of the Holy Ghost. But of these three Persons there is one Godhead and equal glory and common majesty without end.

We shall believe that the Father is this Person of the Father, and so these other two Persons are the Person of the Son and the Person of the Holy Ghost. So although these Persons are distinct, and each is distinct from the other, nevertheless none of them is different from the others in nature, since there is one nature common to them all, and so one Godhead is common to them all, since each of these and all of these are the same God. And by this same reasoning all these are equal in glory, and the majesty of them all endures without end. For this glory and majesty are nothing but this Godhead. And so if men said that this same glory and majesty were of these three Persons, they would speak truly and not contrary hereto. But glory and majesty sometimes indicate relationships which clerks say are diverse in reason.

Qualis pater, talis filius, talis spiritus sanctus. As is the Father, so is the Son, and so is the Holy Ghost.

In this Holy Trinity is no such quality as is in creatures. But we must speak in some way to tell this nature of God, which is of God alone. For tongues fail in telling of God because of His excellence. So it is told accordingly what is this quality of God in which these three Persons are each equal to the other.

Increatus pater, increatus filius, increatus spiritus sanctus. Uncreated is the Father, uncreated is the Son, and uncreated is the Holy Ghost.

For all these three Persons are the same God, Who is without beginning and also without end; and so none of these three Persons may be made of anything.

Immensus pater, immensus filius, immensus spiritus sanctus. The Father is great beyond measure, and also the Son, with the Holy Ghost.

For there is one common greatness of all these three Persons, and afterwards no quality [1] or extension of God's parts. For this Holy Trinity is without any parts. But the Holy Trinity is at every part of the world. And if the world were greater the Trinity would be there, for God cannot fail to be in every place or thing that He has made. But if there were an empty place beyond measure outside heaven, God would be everywhere in that place. But there is no such empty place.

Æternus pater, æternus filius, æternus spiritus sanctus. The Father is without beginning, and also without end, and so are the other two Persons.

And so is all this Trinity, since each of these is the same God, that cannot be measured nor made.

[1] Bodleian MS. 288 gives "quantity," *i.e.* "measure."

Et tamen non tres æterni, sed unus æternus : sicut non tres increati nec tres immensi, sed unus increatus et unus immensus. And nevertheless if God be such, there are not three Gods such, for there is but one God, of whatever manner He may be. And so there are not three Uncreated, nor three thus Great, nor three without end ; but all these three Persons are but one such God.

But here men may better tell in Latin the subtlety of this matter, because articles with cases, gender and number are an aid to speech here. Yet although all these three Persons of God are thus infinitely great, they are not three Gods that have such qualities, but they are three Persons that have such properties.

Similiter omnipotens pater, omnipotens filius, omnipotens spiritus sanctus. Et tamen non tres omnipotentes, sed unus omnipotens. Also the Father is Almighty, the Son is Almighty, the Holy Ghost is Almighty. And nevertheless not three Gods are almighty, but one God is Almighty.

We shall believe of our God that He is one Sovereign Spirit, one Nature and one Substance, one God and one Being ; and He is without parts and wholly such as we have said. And this God has power to know Himself and to will Himself. This Power is the First Person, this Knowledge is the Second Person, and this Will the Third Person ; and all these Three are one God. And so these three names that must needs belong to the whole Trinity are used singly of our God, without division. And as these three Persons of God are all mighty and all good, so each of them is Almighty and the same Almighty God. And clerks say that God is Almighty, because if He will that anything be done He does it in His time ; and nothing may do thus but God. For angels will that they be made, but yet they may not make themselves. But

all these Persons are of one Nature; that is, thus almighty, as we have said, and thus this creed says accordingly

Ita deus pater, deus filius, deus spiritus sanctus. Et tamen non tres dei, sed unus est deus: ita dominus pater, dominus filius, dominus spiritus sanctus. Et tamen non tres domini, sed unus est dominus. So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is the same God. And nevertheless there are not three Gods, but one God is all these three. And so the Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, and the Holy Ghost is Lord. And yet there are not three Lords, but one Lord is each of these.

And the rotten argument of men, which fools make without reason, is not worth telling for its stupidity, that if this God be this Father, and the same God be His Son, then this Father is the Son, because they are both one Godhead. These fools must learn philosophy, and how many things may be a common thing although they are diverse in themselves but they do not differ from the common thing.

Quia sicut singillatim unamquamque personam deum ac dominum confiteri christiana veritate compellimur: ita tres deos aut dominos dicere catholica religione prohibemur.

And for this reason the creed declares that *we are required by Christian truth to grant that each of these three Persons is fully God and fully Lord, even the same that each one is.* And yet *we are forbidden by God to say that there are three Gods, or that these three Persons are three Lords by the general religion.* For One God and One Lord is common to these three Persons.

Pater a nullo est factus, nec creatus, nec genitus.

With this sentence is declared the order amongst these Persons. *But the Father is made of none, nor made of anything, nor begotten.*

So the Father is the First Person, Who can have no principle of His being.

Filius a patre solo est : non factus, nec creatus, sed genitus. The Son is of the Father alone, not made, nor made out of anything, but born.

And here clerks must awaken their wits and understand two births. The first is not the making of a thing, but the cause thereof from eternity. As, if the sun were never made—as the error of clerks has often declared—yet this sun would cause its light, either within or without. So the First Person of God brings forth the Second Person, as God, because of the power to know Himself, knows Himself fully. And this thing was without beginning, and it may have no end hereafter. And this birth or begetting is the first that can be. And of this comes bodily begetting when one nature brings forth another.

Spiritus sanctus a patre et filio : non factus, nec creatus, nec genitus, sed procedens.

And here men must watch carefully to know how this Third Person comes both of the Father and the Son ; in which we Latins differ from the Greeks, who say that this Third Person comes wholly from the First alone, and we say that this Holy Ghost comes both from the Father and from the Son. Because this Father and this Son are one principle of this Third Person we say in this creed that *the Holy Ghost comes both of the Father and of the Son, not made, nor begotten, but coming forth* as we explained of the double birth. So there are two forthcomings. This coming forth that we tell of here is without beginning or ending, but it is a deliberate bringing forth by two Persons. And thus they may not be one Father, nor this Third Person their Son.

But Faith teaches us that as God knows Himself because He can know Himself, so because of these two things God exists in His own Will, since God has good will in Himself by this power and this knowing. But let us not understand these three Persons as three bodies or three substances, but as one simple Substance that is common to them all.

Unus ergo pater, non tres patres : unus filius, non tres filii : unus spiritus sanctus, non tres spiritus sancti. And wherefore we must needs confess that there is One Father, not three Fathers ; one Son, not three Sons : one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts.

And thus there are three Persons within one Godhead, although there are many without.

Et in hac trinitate nihil prius aut posterius, nihil majus aut minus : sed totæ tres personæ coæternæ sibi sunt et coæquales. And in this Trinity is nothing before nor after, more nor less : but all these three Persons are equal without beginning or end, equal in power and in Godhead.

Here men must know, because of heretics, that there are two priorities and two posterities also that men speak of in this matter. For the first priority is the priority of coming forth, and the other is the priority of nature. In this Trinity is the first priority that is spoken of here, since one Person comes of another and there is order amongst these Persons. The second priority is not here, since all these three are one nature, and the same God is the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost together. And God would that we Latins corrected the Greeks about the Son as we have corrected them in this point, adding the Son to the Father, and saying truly that they are one Principle bringing forth the Holy Ghost. But we fail God's Son in following His Manhood.

Ita ut per omnia sicut jam supra dictum est, et unitas in trinitate et trinitas in unitate veneranda sit. Qui vult ergo salvus esse, ita de trinitate sentiat.

And so we gather here, *as we have said already, that both the Unity in Trinity, and Trinity in Persons, and Trinity in this Unity are to be worshipped above all things. And whoever will be saved, let him feel thus about the Trinity.* If we feel not thus expressly, let us see to it that we feel thus in common.

Sed necessarium est ad æternam salutem, ut incarnationem quoque domini nostri jesu christi fideliter credat. Besides the Godhead of these three Persons, it is necessary for us to know the manhood of this Second Person and so to believe it fully.

For Christ is the union of the two substances of Godhead and manhood, and the beginning of our faith, our salvation and our bliss. For had not Christ thus been man we should never have been saved ; and so in Christ, both God and Man, is the salvation of mankind. And it is hard to believe in the Trinity, but it is harder to many to believe in two natures in one Person. For just as in the Trinity three Persons are one nature, so in the Incarnation two natures are both one Person. Wherefore our faith teaches

Est ergo fides recta ut credamus et confiteamur quia dominus noster Jesus Christus dei filius, deus et homo est. Deus est ex substantia patris ante sæcula genitus : et homo est ex substantia matris in sæculo natus. Perfectus deus, perfectus homo : ex anima rationali, et humana carne subsistens. Therefore the right faith is that we believe and acknowledge that our Lord Jesus Christ is God's Son, both God and Man. He is God of His Father's substance, born spiritually before the

world. And He is Man of His Mother's substance, born and made Man in the world. And so He is perfect God as He was before the world, and He is perfect Man made of a reasonable soul and of the flesh of man.

And so He is become our Brother, not made of the Godhead and flesh without man's soul in this flesh, nor of the Godhead and of this soul without a true body of man. But Christ has a true Body and Soul as the other brethren that He has, of the same nature that they are, although He might not sin as they.

Æqualis patri secundum divinitatem: minor patre secundum humanitatem.

Here, because of heretics, men must learn how they shall speak in this matter. For as truants beguile fools in the matter of the Trinity, so they beguile other truants in the Incarnation of Christ. Wherefore faith teaches us what we should believe of Christ and how we should declare of Him what belongs to His pure Manhood and also to His pure Godhead, since Christ is both these together, and so *equal to the Father by His Godhead and less than the Father by His Manhood.* And since Christ is these two natures, by miracle and divers reasons, let us declare both these of Him as we declare of these two natures. And since Christ is both God and Man, let us declare that He is equal to the Father and therewith less than the Father, because His Godhead and His Manhood are such. And these two are not contraries. Christ is equal to the Father and therewith less than the Father since Christ is both these natures. But if Christ were equal with the Father and therewith less than the Father by the same nature of Christ, then two contraries followed Him. And thus Christ declares in the Gospel, without the clothing of other

words, that the Father is more than He, and all that the Father has is His. And if we declare this, to wit, that Christ is not equal with the Father, because His Manhood is not equal, this is not contrary to the other, as some men suppose and some men suppose not.

Qui licet deus sit et homo : non duo tamen sed unus est christus.

But if Christ be God and Man, and so two natures and both of them, *nevertheless Christ is not two Persons, but One* ; that is, both God and Man. And this Person is the Godhead, and moreover it is Manhood. And so shall we declare of Christ without fear, by these two natures, both that which belongs to His Godhead and thereby that which belongs to His Manhood.

Unus autem non conversione divinitatis in carnem, sed assumptione humanitatis in deum.

Christ is *one Person, not by the turning of the Godhead into flesh, but by the taking of manhood into the Godhead.* For Christ took the Manhood that He had not before, and left not the Godhead that He had always. And yet the Godhead may not be the Manhood, although they are one Person.

Unus omnino non confusione substantiæ, sed unitate personæ.

And thus Christ is *especially one not by confusion of His substance, but by the unity of His Person,* which is both these two substances. And so Christ began to be this, but He did not begin to be a Person, as Christ was not twice a Person nor twice a Man by His death. And so the Godhead of Christ is not mixed with His Manhood, nor are either of these two natures turned into the other, but both these natures are whole in Christ.

Nam sicut anima rationalis et caro unus est homo : ita deus et homo unus est christus. Wherefore as a reasonable soul and flesh are both one man, so in Christ both God and Man are the one Person of Christ.

And so this soul that is this man is not a part but is the whole of man ; thus verily a man is a spirit and shall live after he is dead.

Qui passus est pro salute nostra : descendit ad inferos : tertia die resurrexit a mortuis.

And thus we declare to our enemies that *Christ suffered for our salvation, went down into hell, and on the third day rose from death.* First He suffered by His flesh, and went to hell by His soul ; and rose both by His Godhead and by His Manhood, which He quickened. But Christ never ceased to be this spirit, although He once ceased to be flesh. And thus He has power to yield His life and take it again.

Ascendit ad cælos, sedet ad dexteram patris omnipotentis : inde venturus est judicare vivos et mortuos. And thus Christ rose to the heavens, sits on the right side of God the Father Almighty, and from thence He is to come to judge both the quick and the dead.

Christ rose by His Manhood, which was moved by His Godhead, and pierced many heavens and rests evermore in glory. At the Day of Doom He shall come to judge both quick and dead who have served Him truly and behaved unnaturally against Him.

Ad cujus adventum omnes homines resurgere habent cum corporibus suis : et reddituri sunt de factis propriis rationem. For this coming at the last day shall all manner of men rise and shall give reason to Christ for their own deeds here.

Et qui bona egerunt ibunt in vitam æternam : qui vero mala, in ignem æternum. And those men that have done good things shall go to life everlasting, and those that have done evil things shall go to everlasting fire.

And we speak here of good and evil done by those that die here in these states.

Hæc est fides catholica : quam nisi quisque fideliter firmiterque crederit, salvus esse non poterit.

This is the general faith, which unless a man believe truly and steadfastly he may not be saved. And although this creed appertains to priests, nevertheless high prelates, such as popes, cardinals and bishops, should study it more especially and teach it to men under them.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

MANUSCRIPTS AND TEXTS USED

THE following manuscripts and texts have been used in compiling this volume :

The Commandment. MS. Camb. Dd. V. 64 collated with MS. Rawlinson A 389. Horstman's text from *Yorkshire Writers —Richard Rolle of Hampole*, vol. i., p. 61 *et seq.* British Museum Addl. MS. 22283.

The Form of Living. MS. Camb. Dd. V. 64, MS. Rawl. C 285, MS. Harl. 1022, MS. Lansd. 455, B.M. Addl. 22283. Horstman's printed text as above.

Meditations on the Passion. MS. Camb., ll. 1, 8, MS. Camb. Addl. 3042. Horstman's printed text as above.

On the Ten Commandments. Printed texts by G. G. Perry (Early English Text Society), 1921, and Horstman (as above) of the Thornton MS., Lincoln Cathedral.

Of the Virtues of the Holy Name. MS. Harl. 1022. Printed text of MS. Thornton, by G. G. Perry, as above.

Ego Dormio. MS. Camb. Dd. V. 64, two versions in MS. Rawl. A 389, ff. 77 and 95b, MS. Arundel 507, B.M. Addl. 22283, 37790. Horstman's printed text as above.

The Bee, etc. Text of MS. Thornton, by G. G. Perry, as above, and text of MS. Longleat 29, by Miss H. E. Allen.

The Mending of Life. Misyn's translation in MS. B.M. Addl. 37790, other translations in MSS. Harl. 1706 and 2406, Lansdowne 455, Latin MSS.—Burney 356, Land. 528,

Cotton Faust. A v., Egerton 671, Harl. 106, 275, 2439, 5398, Roy. 8A vii., 12E xvi., 13E ix., 17B xvii., Sloane 2275, B.M. Addl. 16170, 24661, 34763 and 34807. E.E.T.S. Text by G. G. Perry.

Commentaries on the Canticles, etc. MS. Harl. 1806, B.M. Addl. MSS: 1896, 10046, 40769, Oxford MSS.—Univ. Coll. 56 and 64, Bodl. 953, Bodl. 288, 877, 467, Douce 258, Magd. Coll. 52, New Coll. 95, Land. 448; Hatfield MS. 39. Printed texts by H. R. Bramley of Univ. Coll., MS. 64, and by T. Arnold of MS. Bodl. 288.

APPENDIX II

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Printed Texts of Manuscripts

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Incendium Amoris, edited by Margaret Deanesley, 1915 (Manchester University Press).

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Meditations on the Passion, edited by Edwin Burton, D.D., 1906 (Catholic Truth Society).

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(a) *Technical :*

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Writings Ascribed to Richard Rolle, Hermit of Hampole, by Hope Emily Allen, 1928 (Oxford University Press). (This contains comprehensive lists of Rolle's works, in manuscript and in print, to date.)

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"Richard Rolle," by Dom Noetinger of Solesmes, *The Month* (London), January 1926.

(b) *Others :*

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The Stations of the Cross, taken freely from Richard Rolle. 1917 (Burns & Oates Ltd., London).

The English Mystics, by Dom David Knowles, O.S.B., 1927 (Burns, Oates & Washbourne, London).

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